STORM FRONT

Tales from StormWrestling.com Vol. 2

Lance Storm

Storm Front

Tales from StormWrestling.com

Volume 2

By, Lance Storm

Acknowledgements

There are a lot of people I need to thank for making "Tales from StormWrestling.com" a reality. Some of which I thanked in "Storm Warning", Volume 1 in the series, but there are additional people I need to thank for their contributions to "Storm Front", Volume 2 in the series.

First and foremost I need to thank Marcus Wynne, if not for him the "Tales from StormWrestling.com" series would not exist. He was the man who convinced me my writing had value and suggested this project. Marcus is also one of my favourite authors so I encourage you to check out his work. You can find him on Google+ as well as facebook. I've also included some

recommendations and excerpts of his work for you to check out at the end of this book.

I also need to thank Nick Boisseau who took over running my website when the guys are Live Audio Wrestling were no longer be able to do so. Nick did a complete redesign and maintained and updated the site for years. He eventually taught me how to maintain the site and I now do so myself. If not for his effort I may have shut down StormWrestling.com almost 10 years ago, and this book would not have been possible.

Likely my biggest debt of gratitude for this volume is to Todd Martin. Todd volunteered to edit this book, and for that I cannot thank him enough. It is because of his efforts that Vol.2 will contain far fewer spelling and grammar mistakes than Vol.1. If you still find the occasional error please don't blame Todd; I am the one ultimately

responsible for what you read here. Any mistakes you find are most likely a result of late changes I made after his edit. If you would like to extend Todd your gratitude you can find him on Twitter @ToddMartinMMA

Last but certainly not least is Matthew Cleary. Matt designed the cover for Storm Warning, and came through for me once again with the Storm Front cover. I am extremely grateful for his efforts. I was a huge pain making constant changes and Matt was gracious enough to make all said changes and not complain about my excessive nit pickiness.

Thanks to you all, your friendship and support does not go unappreciated.

Introduction

The following is not an autobiography; it is a collection of commentaries I wrote for my website (www.StormWrestling.com) during my active career. It's actually the second instalment in a series, which I hope you figured out by the "Volume 2" part of the title. Volume one was called "Storm Warning" and is also available from Amazon. Volume 1 included commentaries written from the start of my website in November 1999 thru to March 2001 and the end of WCW.

"Storm Front" picks up where "Storm Warning" left off and covers what I wrote during my time with World Wrestling Entertainment, starting with my Invasion of WWE in May of 2001, running through April

2004 and the end of my time on the active roster. While these commentaries were all written during my time in WWE they do not exclusively cover the WWE portion of my career. On occasion I took a look back at other parts of my early career, flashing back to my Indy days, my time in SMW, and ECW. All of these commentaries were previously posted on my website, but they have all been down for years, and I've added a lot of new material with insight and reflection on what I wrote. I've added several new stories that offer a more unfiltered view of how I was really feeling at the time of my writing. I cover a lot of new ground and offer the deepest insight I've ever shared into the reasons behind my early in-ring retirement.

I've also included a ton of photos and documents which I think help illustrate this book. I hope you enjoy this trip back in Storm History, I know I did.

A New Beginning

This first story seemed like the perfect place to kick off this next volume of StormWrestling.com commentaries. If you haven't read the first volume it's available on Amazon.com and I highly recommend it. How could I not? I wrote it! The last volume finished up with the commentary I wrote right after the last WCW Nitro show. I was the last person to leave a WCW locker room, figuratively closing the WCW chapter in the history of pro-wrestling. To stick with that theme, I'm opening this book with the commentary I wrote right after I was the first WCW guy to appear on WWE (Then still WWF) television. With one Superkick I opened the chapter in pro-wrestling history called the Invasion. It would turn out to be a

fairly ill-fated chapter, but at the time it seemed like a pretty big deal.

"IWA to WWF"

May 30, 2001

Sorry this is a bit late this week but, to say the least, I've been busy! It all started Thursday morning when I headed to Winnipeg for my first Indy bookings in almost 6 years. The shows were of course horrendous! That's not to say I didn't have fun. It's just after doing live televised events with the sets and all the pyro, working small local venues in front of a couple hundred people feels like a bit of a step back. Apart from them being really small shows I had a great time. It's nice going to Winnipeg some time other than the winter! My four days in "the Peg" were like a big family reunion. I got to see a lot of old faces that I haven't

seen in a long time, and a few new faces I finally got to match up with names and voices I've been dealing with for a while. The highlight was of course seeing my good buddy Natch and getting to work with Dr. Luther. Dr. Luther and I go way back to 1990 when I first broke in and I hadn't worked with him since 1995. Unfortunately the ring we had to work in was a death trap, but we still managed to have fun and put out a pretty entertaining match. Had we actually been able to take a bump in that ring without fear of breaking our backs we could have really done something. Len (Dr. Luther) and I have always gelled well together in the ring and I guess some things never change. The spot of the night was when I got to apply the Canadian Maple Leaf to his midget sidekick, Evil Brian. It wasn't easy with his legs being so short but the pop from the rather proportional small crowd was well worth it. Thanks to

everyone who came out to see me at either the live events or the autograph sessions I did while I was in town.

Now on to Monday, which as you should know was a pretty big day for me. For those of you who think I K-5'd you, I didn't know anything about it till late Monday afternoon. I was kept in the dark as much as everyone else, which is good because the less people that know about things like this the better the reaction. What can I say about RAW? It was an incredible night for me. Getting to be the first WCW invader and the added bonus of doing it in my hometown was both an honor and... let's be honest, really damn cool! It's kind of interesting that I was the last person to leave the final WCW show and the first to appear on the WWF show. I am a lucky man! Apart from the rush of that great crowd in Calgary…Alberta, Canada there were a few other things that had me jacked up for the

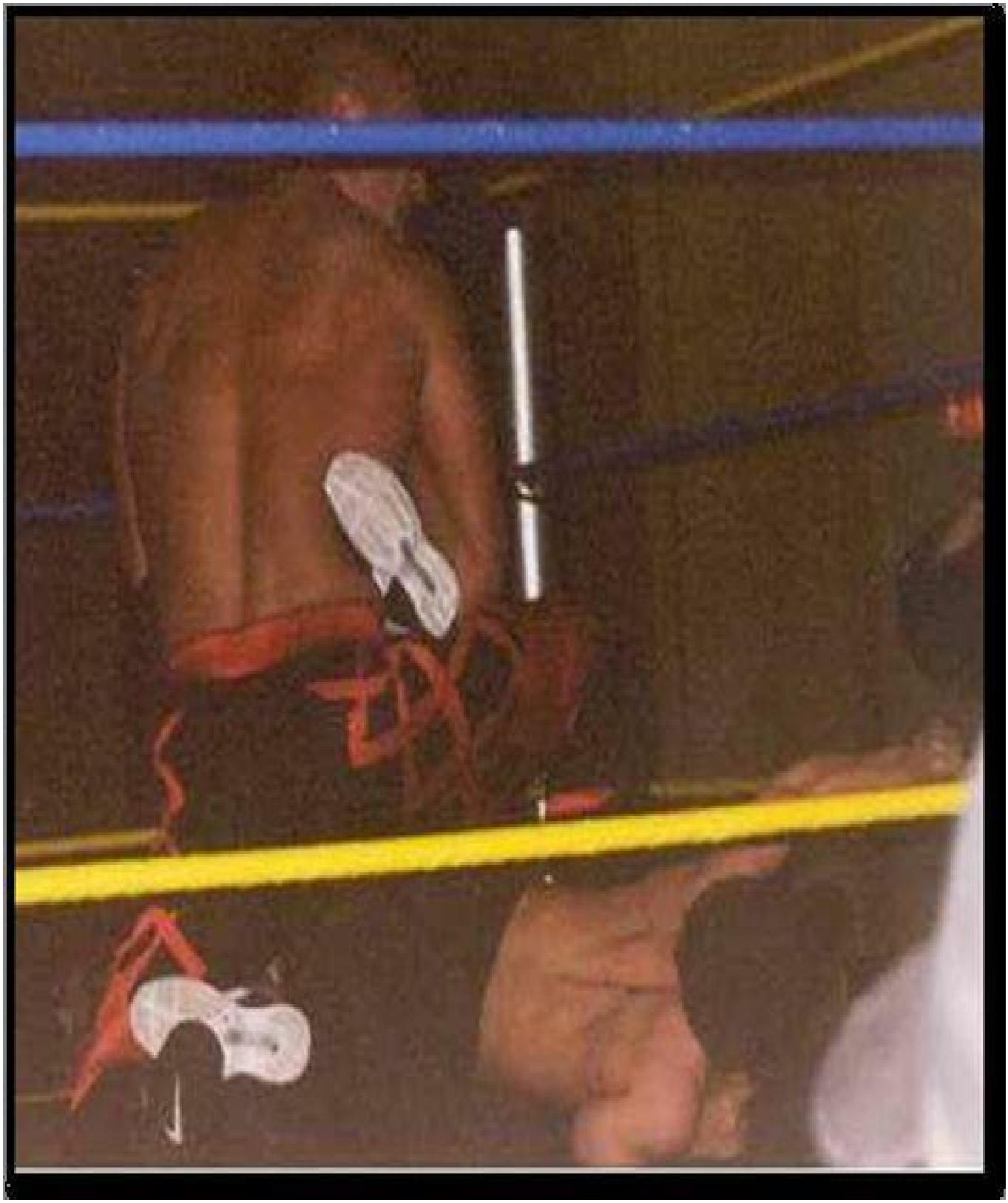
show.

Champaign Gerry Morrow was there that night. It was so great to see him again and I thought it appropriate that the man who taught me so much was there on what was likely the biggest night of my career. Gerry was the true gentleman and class act he always was. He thanked me for the commentary I wrote on him for this site (It's included in Storm Warning vol. 1), which I never thought in a million years he would see, (I doubt he's much of a web surfer!) and said how proud he was of me and how happy he was about my success. Seeing Paul Heyman again was a blast. I had forgotten how much I liked being around wrestling and him. We both have this passion for the business that just takes over. We talk about angles and promos and we both get goose bumps. Working with Paul again is going to be the best part about my new work environment. I learn from him every time he

opens his mouth and believe me that's quite often. (Sorry Paul! But come on, it was funny right?).

I don't want to get into any details about my actual meeting with Jim Ross, but let me assure you it was very positive. Everyone in the company, from Vince McMahon to the security guys in the black T-shirts went out of their way to make me feel welcome. I can't say enough about the professionalism of everyone I met. That's going to have to do for this week. I'm tired and need some sleep.

Till next week,
Lance



Putting the Half Crab on Evil Brian at IWA show

Smokey Mountain Wrestling

Not every commentary you read here will be about my time in WWE. As I explained in the introduction they are just the commentaries I wrote while in WWE. This next story I reference my time in SMW from 1994. SMW was run by Jim Cornette and based in Knoxville, TN. I mention that Jericho was out because he had surgery on his arm but I don't provide a lot of details. The afternoon before the Night of Legends show (SMW biggest show) Jericho was practicing a Shooting Star press off the top rope and landed bad breaking his arm. It was a displaced fracture and he was immediately booked for surgery the next morning. With Night of Legends being such a big show Jericho snuck out of the hospital

and returned to work the match with his arm in a plastic splint.

It was an incredible match in many ways not the least of which being the fact that Jericho bled like a stuck pig in it; it was one of the bloodiest matches I've ever seen. The following morning I drove him to the hospital for his surgery in hopes that he would be out of surgery in time to be in my corner at the Fire on the Mountain event that night. He ended up having to stay in hospital overnight and I went to the Johnson City, TN show without him.

"Working"

June 4, 2001

I think the meaning of the word "Working" or "Work" is lost on a lot of people so I'm going to talk about one specific match I had a few years ago that, I think, illustrates what "working" really is. Most people remember, or at least have heard of, The Night of Legends in SMW, the blood bath tag match between The Thrill Seekers and The Heavenly Bodies. Well in addition to that big night we did Fire on the Mountain in Johnson City the following night. This was an incredible show and I beat the Heavenly Bodies in a handicapped match (Jericho had surgery on his arm that day and missed the show). It was a great

match and it got me over huge as a baby face. This isn't the match I'm going to talk about however. I'm going to talk about the match I had the next time we were in Johnson City.

After my unbelievable win over the Bodies I was expecting a big match for my return. Instead of my big match I was second match on the card against The Hornet. The Hornet was a masked JOB guy. I couldn't believe it; Cornette obviously didn't have a clue what to do now that Jericho was hurt. I didn't see any point to this match at all. Everyone in the building would know I was beating this guy, so what was the point of even going out there? There wasn't a point, so I decided to make my match a bit of a wrestling lesson. It wasn't a lesson for the fans or for The Hornet; it was a lesson in progress for me. I decided to try and do the hardest thing I could in that match, make the fans believe I was going to lose. I pulled

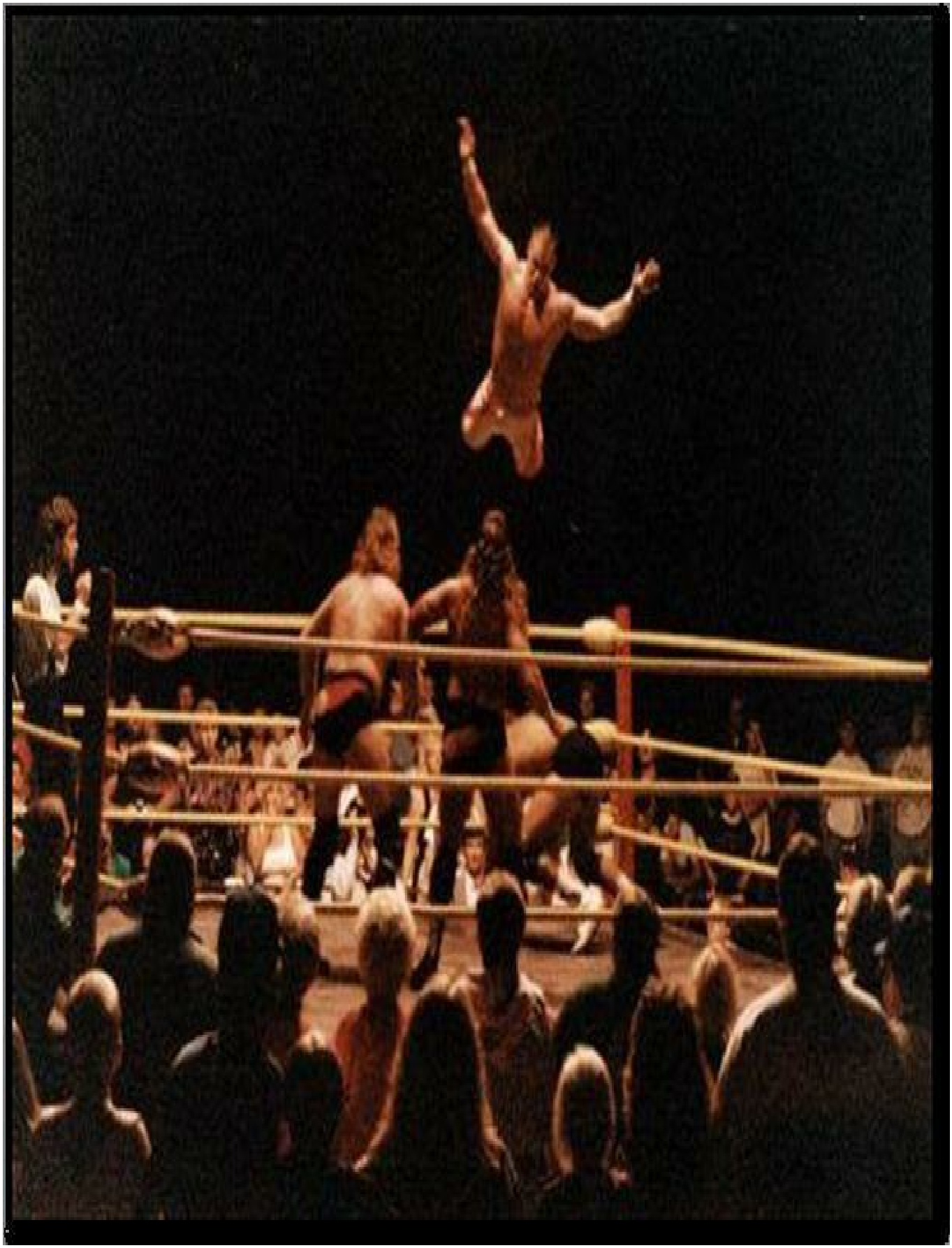
Brian (The Hornet) aside and told him of my plan. I said I was gearing the match and the entire finish around one believable near fall for him. I figured if we could make those people bite on that one false finish we had accomplished something.

I asked the ref to really sell this one pin attempt, as the finish, and told him I'd be kicking out tight. I had Brian be sure to hit his move and hook me like it was the win of a lifetime. They were to do everything they'd do if it were, in fact, the finish of the match. We had our match, and did everything the way we would if I was going to put him over. It was decent match but the crowd wasn't completely into it, which is about what I expected. After all, in their eyes this wasn't much more than a squash match. We started into the finish and when it was time I charged him in the corner. He popped his elbow out at the last second and caught me in the chin. He hooked me and hit a

Tornado DDT out of the corner. He jumped on me and hooked both legs and tied me up. The ref hit the count and for that 10th of a second between when guys usually kick out and when I actually did, that crowd held their breath and when I kicked out the place went "OH!!!!!!!!!" and I mean everybody, they totally bought that that was the finish.

We had done it. We made that crowd believe something they knew in their hearts wasn't going to happen. We "worked" the crowd. We sold them the bill of goods we wanted to sell them, not the bill of goods they planned on buying. That is the dying art of "working". Doing high spots is just athletics, it's part of wrestling, but it has very little to do with actually "working."

Till next week,
Lance



From the big “Fire on the Mountain” show in Johnson City, TN
That’s Tracy Smothers ducking under me in the corner he
was the last minute replacement for Chris Jericho

The Rating Game

This next piece is one of my favourites. Some of the references were fairly inside, even back then, so I need to provide a fair bit of back story. That will help you understand what was going on when I wrote this, as well as provide most of the inside knowledge needed to appreciate the comedy. I will also do a short follow up because I think many of the jokes you won't get without some form of post script explanation. This commentary was not written so much for the general public but for me and a select few. In this commentary I rank "Internet Stooges" and "Dirt Sheet Writers". These are derogatory terms for the guys who cover pro-wrestling either on the Internet or in newsletters. The piece was

meant to be completely sarcastic as far as the ratings go, but some of the comments about the individual "reporters" were a means to voice my honest opinions and frustrations. The main motivation for this commentary was a website that was brought to my attention where a bunch of fans rated workers with a Top 500 list. This kicked off a huge debate about rating workers that most people to this day still don't understand.

On the heels of this huge debate my buddy Don Callis and I had a huge issue with a reporter from Slam Wrestling, and we decided to write this sarcastic, smart ass commentary where we as workers would rate the people trying to rate workers. It was intended to be a joint effort but with me on the road and Don at home, apart from helping with the initial idea Don didn't contribute very much. If you've read my first book, that was not uncharacteristic of Mr. Callis. To make a well rounded list I

included anyone I could think of including many reporter types I knew and was friends with. The friends were the ones I tried to make humorous, while I took a much stiffer approach with the others.

"Rating Internet Stooges & Dirt Sheet Writers"

June 11, 2001

This week's piece is a collaborative effort between Don Callis and me. Collaborative in that we came up with the idea together. Being that he is a pain in the ass to pin down when it actually comes time to getting any work done, I took it upon myself to take it from here. We know that there are a lot of people out there who read "Internet Stooge Reports and Dirt Sheets", which is fine but for those select few who thrive on and worship "Internet Stooges and Dirt Sheet Writers" we felt an obligation to grade said individuals so that both them and you alike could have a better understanding

and appreciation of the complex art of "Internet Stooging and Dirt Sheet Writing". Let me start out by stating that this grading system is a precise and accurate exact science. I looked into all aspects of "Internet Stooging and Dirt Sheet Writing" and after literally seconds, perhaps even minutes of close debate (with myself, which as you know is very objective) I have come up with the following, accurate grade results.

Dave Scherer: (A+) Dave tops my list based on the Sherlock Holmes like investigative skill he used in cracking wrestling's best kept secret. No, not that wrestling is fake, but rather the unbelievable RVD/420/High Times scandal. I know many have criticized Scherer for almost singlehandedly destroying a promising career, but you have to respect his unparalleled investigative skills.

Bryan Alvarez: (B) This ranking may seem a bit high but anyone who can make a living critiquing and criticizing this industry and the workers therein while still taking Indy bookings deserves something. My only questions are: how does he find people willing to book him and does he bring enough sour cream to the matches, for all the potatoes he must receive while working?

Dave Meltzer: (C-) Some of you less enlightened souls may have thought Dave a lock for the top spot, but let's be honest. He is protected by the huge marketing machine behind both The Observer and Eyada.com. He enjoys what lowly independent "Internet Stooges and Dirt Sheet Writers" can only dream about, that big Federation protection and the instant credibility that comes therein.

Jeff Marek: (D+) While his reporting may

warrant a high grade, I had to bump him down based on his newly acquired, Paul Heyman esque, telephone etiquette. I'd elaborate but I'm about to go through a tunnel and will have to call you back!

Bob Ryder: (Grade pending) Bob delivered one hell of a "Hope Spot" with the Bret Hart signs with WCW/WWF. We'll have to wait and see if his "Old WCW" influences are far enough behind him and he can actually deliver a finish!

Wade Keller: (F) I have no real basis for this grade, but out of respect for Jim Cornette I figured I should fail him!

Jason Powell: (F) Jason wins the "National Inquirer's Internet Stooge Dirt Sheet Writers Award for lack of integrity in writing" for knowingly writing false negative reports, which can be damaging to

people's careers, simply to drive web-traffic and to satisfy the source who fed him the falsehood.

John Molinaro: (F) For publicly insulting and criticizing "every" person he has ever interviewed in one article, "Cyrus is Dead Wrong" John gets the "Biting the hand that feeds you award". Good luck securing interviews in the future and feel free to forget my phone number and email address!

The DVD Guys: (F-) I have no criteria for ranking these guys dead last, but hey, I've read Internet Stooge reports and Dirt Sheets before, so I must know what I'm talking about. Who better to rank them than I!

Well that's all for this week. I hope I have helped enlighten everyone and remember this list is not opinion or speculation. It is, if I can borrow a phrase

from “My Cousin Vinny”, “Dead on Balls Accurate!”

Till next week,
Lance Storm

Rating Game: Follow up

Okay now for the follow up to explain some of the evaluations. Dave Scherer I knew from ECW (he did the ECW website) and he was taking a ton of Internet heat at the time for an article he wrote about Rob Van Dam's reputation as a pot smoker. Despite this being a part of RVD's in ring character and about the worst kept secret in the business, some people were giving Dave a hard time for the damage to RVD's career his article about Rob's pot use had done. Seriously, this would be the equivalent of someone breaking the story that Scott Hall has issues with alcohol.

I did not know Bryan Alvarez back then, but we have since become good friends. All I knew about Bryan was that he

wrote a newsletter, worked alongside Dave Meltzer in some capacity and occasionally worked as an Indy wrestler. Unlike most sports, wrestling looks down on those who cover and report on it so I was amazed that Bryan took bookings, figuring that eventually he'd end up booked with someone he gave an unfavorable review to, and he'd get his ass handed to him. Also the potato comment was in reference to the slang term in wrestling where stiff or sold shots thrown at your opponent are called potatoes.

The Dave Meltzer review was probably the one I was most happy with, but I doubt anyone else got it. Dave is the industry leader when it comes to reporting on pro-wrestling. His Wrestling Observer newsletter was pretty much the original and is by far the most respected newsletter and website going. He was and still is the top dog so to speak in his field. On the top 500

list website HHH (The wrestling industry leader at the time) was ranked fairly low, and the excuse given for this ranking was that he was protected and pushed by the WWE machine and it was the company with all their bells and whistles that made him look better than his Indy counter parts. I thought throwing that bullshit logic back at them with Dave was perfect.

Jeff Marek was and still is a friend of mine, although we did fall out of touch for a few years between then and now. His review was just a personal joke pointing out that he wasn't returning my calls like he used to. The "I'll have to call you back; I'm going through a tunnel" was a pot shot at Paul Heyman, who was notorious for lame excuses like that to get you off the phone.

I have no idea what the Bob Ryder reference was about; I've completely forgotten. I know he had just teased at some big happening with Bret Hart that no one

else had reported. It was a huge scoop but there was some debate over whether he was just blowing smoke or had actually gotten a scoop. I was friends with Bob at the time (again from our mutual involvement in ECW) so this was my way of saying something without burying my friend. I don't believe he ever delivered the finish.

I had never to my knowledge even talked to Wade Keller or read much of what he reported but there was an incident a year or two before I wrote this between Jim Cornette and Wade Keller that started with Wade burying Cornette in his newsletter, or something to that effect, and Cornette vowing to kill him. I was shaky on the exact details but I knew for a fact Jim hated him, and that was good enough for me.

The Jason Powell story is a personal one I never got into. When I was first looking to leave ECW I started sending feelers out to WCW to see where I stood. Paul Heyman

must have found out about it because he fed a bullshit story to Jason Powell about me having a big head and being difficult to work with. Jason had been to a couple of ECW shows so I knew he and Paul were friends. As soon as I read the story I knew it had come from Paul and was intended to sabotage my chances of finding work outside of ECW. I was pretty pissed and called Powell on the story and its legitimacy, accusing him of getting it from Paul. While Jason never outright admitted Paul was the source of the story, he did not argue with me when I said it was. Additionally, he did admit that when he contacted others in the company to verify the story every single person he contacted denied the story and said it was bullshit. Powell then told me he printed the story because if he didn't he would likely not get anymore scoops from this particular source. Considering this could have sabotaged my entire career and

seriously hampered my ability to earn a living and support my family, I considered Powell to be a giant douche bag and voiced my anger here.

John Molinaro was the guy Don Callis and I first had the issue with. I don't remember what the original issue was but he and Don were in a heated debate over something and in his rebuttal John stated that every single wrestler he's ever interviewed has overstated how much money they've drawn in this business, basically calling every person he's interviewed a liar. I took exception to this because I'd been interviewed by John and never once ever claimed to have drawn a dime. This escalated when I went over John's head to his editor pointing out John's unprofessionalism and outright inaccuracy in what he wrote. Molinaro really got his back up, but was eventually made to apologize by his editor. I buried the hatchet

with Slam Wrestling, but never spoke to Molinaro again.

The DVD guys were last and since these were the guys who started the whole ratings debate, I threw their own stupid logic back at them giving them the lowest grade. Their argument was that they are fans and watch lots of matches therefore they are qualified to rank the workers in said matches. My argument was that watching matches as fans only qualifies you to rank said matches by how much you like them, not the people performing them.

Me and my buddy Jeff Marek from...I think my ECW days.

Stampede Wrestling

Contrary to popular belief, I did not start my wrestling career in Stampede Wrestling. I was trained at the Hart Brothers' Pro Wrestling Camp and started my career in Calgary, but Stampede Wrestling closed its doors in December of 1989. I broke in the summer of 1990, missing out on the opportunity of working under the famed Stampede Wrestling banner. I did wrestle on one show under the Stampede banner in February of 1992 at the infamous Stampede Pavilion, but that show was not promoted by the Hart family. During my time off between WCW and WWE the office encouraged me to stay active in the ring to avoid rust and even mentioned sending me to their developmental system (OVW) if I

couldn't find bookings at home. I had no interest in leaving home so in addition to the bookings in Winnipeg you read about earlier, I also accepted 4 shots for Stampede Wrestling in June of 2000. These were authentic Hart Family shows, booked by Ross Hart, and headlined by Bruce. While Stampede was still technically closed down, Bruce and Ross would run the occasional show and on this occasion they had booked 4 shows and were bringing in some talent to work on them. They were bringing in Michael Modest and Christopher Daniels, so I accepted the bookings on condition of being able to work with Chris, leaving Modest to work with Bruce. Daniels and I had been friends from our time in ECW and WCW together so he stayed at my place during the tour and both he and Modest rode with me to the shows.

The following is my account of the tour. There is a much bigger story to the weekend,

but I'll save that for my autobiography. After the article is a picture of me and Stu Hart taken right after my match at the Calgary show. Stu was 86 at the time, and as soon as my match ended one of his daughters brought me over to say hi to Stu. It very much felt like being ushered in to meet the aged crime boss of a famous mob family. He shook my hand firmly as he always did, looking at the size of my arm. He then uttered the words I will remember forever, in that famous Stu Hart voice, "You're a big bastard...ah…are you a wrestler or a bodybuilder?" I thought this a funny question seeing that I had just wrestled a match, which he had watched, and walked straight from the ring, in my tights, to say hello to him. I suppose he was just complimenting my physique, and he was 86 after all, but for some reason I found this funny. Thankfully one of his daughters (I think it was Ellie) leaned in and said,

“He’s a wrester dad, Keith trained him.” To this the proud father replied, “Well…ah… Keith can wrestle a little bit…ah.” I took this as my cue, thanked Stu again and made my departure.

Showing my respects to the "Crime

Boss" Stu Hart, and yes I am in fact a "big bastard".

“Return to Stampede Wrestling”

June 27, 2001

Sorry, I’m a bit late this week, but I have been busy. This past week (Thurs. thru Sun.) I worked 4 shots for Stampede Wrestling. It was the most active wrestling week I’ve had in almost a year. Even when WCW was up and running, we seldom ran more than 2 or 3 days in a row, and of late, due to the shut down, I’ve been even less active than that. On top of the Stampede shows I had to fly to New York to be at RAW and SmackDown and as luck would have it I am still on the road now. It was like stepping back in time, doing the Stampede shows. I got to work towns that I worked when I first broke in and even saw some of the boys that

I worked with, way back when. It reminded me of the expression, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." It was good both physically and mentally for me. I needed to get back in the ring and really work, to remind my body what it was like, and to make sure my body was in good enough shape to make it through a hard worked match. I've been running on the treadmill while I've been off, but it's not the same thing as working in the ring.

Of the four shows Friday and Saturday where the best; they had the better crowds and I had my best performances. I wrestled Chris Daniels all four nights, at my request; I had wanted to wrestle Chris since I first met him in ECW and this was my chance. I figured he would be safe and worked regularly enough to test my conditioning. I was right on both counts and Chris and I gelled well right from the start. I was very conscious about pacing myself but by the

second night didn't have to hold back at all. The hardest part of the matches was actually adjusting to being a baby face again. After about 3 years as a heel I don't much care for being a baby face and I found the transition a bit difficult. Your mind set and repertoire changes when you are a heel and switching it back takes a bit. It was funny, right before our first show I mentioned to Chris that I hate being a face and he looked at me with a very concerned expression on his face and asked, "You aren't planning on making me the baby face are you?" I looked at him and laughed and said, "No" but for the split second he thought I was going to try and make him get over as the face in my hometown. Actually it would have been a fun test to try to see if we could have done it. Anyway the matches went real well and the crowd seemed to like them. My thanks to everyone who showed up (especially the girls from Arizona, who made the drive to

Calgary to see the shows), Chris for making me work and giving me good matches, Michael Modest for coining the title "Lure Mogul", and last but not least the "Indy Parking Lot Sweeper" for giving Chris, Mike and I one of the best laughs we've ever had. Look for her in a parking lot near you, she is tremendous!

The last show on Sunday is where things really got busy for me. I had to go on first because I had a red eye flight out that night to New York. I wrested the opener, showered, hopped in my car and raced back to Calgary (The Sunday show was in Drumheller, which is about an hour and 45-minute drive from Calgary). I made the airport in time and flew all night to get to Madison Square Garden by 10 am. The rest of the boys didn't have to be there until 1pm so I had time for a short nap before everyone arrived. I didn't do anything on the shows, but I did get a chance to get in the ring

beforehand to better acclimatize myself with the much bigger WWF rings. It was cool being in what is likely the most famous arena in the world, but after being up for almost 2 full days and having to get up early every day since, I'm wearing out and in need of rest.

So, on that note I'm going to rap this commentary up. It's not my best work, but as I said previously, I'm really tired and need to go to bed.

Till next week, good night!
Lance

Prompting the Stampede tour with
Bruce Hart who constantly
name dropped guys not on the tour
rather than promoting me,
the guy who actually was.

A Bit Late this Week

I almost laughed out loud when I read the first line of my next commentary. It seems I was starting almost every commentary, back then, with an apology for being late. The WWE road schedule takes a lot of getting used to and I was very diligent to write a commentary every week. I am nothing if not a man of routine, so not being able to keep up that routine was starting to get to me, which I believe will be a running theme for quite a while.

“Back to Work and Then Some“

July 11, 2001

Sorry that this is a bit late this week but with the busier road schedule that I am now on, commentaries being a bit late or even perhaps skipped will be an unavoidable thing. This past week was very busy for me as I did my first WWF house shows as well as wrestle my first couple of WWF televised matches. I had to decide between sleeping and trying to get to the gym or doing my commentary. The commentary lost out and for that matter so did the gym part a couple of the days. It will take me a little while to get used to this more hectic road schedule.

Anyway with that said it was a great

week for me. Saturday and Sunday I wrestled my first official WWF matches, when I challenged Booker T for the WCW title on house shows in Charleston, SC and Augusta, GA. I was really happy with these matches and hope the local fans were as well. I've always enjoyed working with Book and having a couple of easy, no pressure, house shows to get me back in the swing of things before TV was a welcome opportunity. Another great part about this week was the end of what I was beginning to think was a McMahon family conspiracy against me: The Cracker Barrel embargo! I was deprived of Cracker Barrel for the 3-months that I was off (there are no Cracker Barrels in Canada) and my first few appearances for the WWF were, again, Cracker Barrel less! My run-in in Calgary, my run-in in Toronto, 2 days in Madison Square Garden, 3 days in Stamford, CT, and 2 days in Seattle-Tacoma, WA. None of these

locations had Cracker Barrel restaurants and I was beginning to think the McMahon family was ribbing me. Well the embargo was lifted and the rib is over because this past week we were in WCW country (South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama), which is more importantly Cracker Barrel country. I managed to visit my favorite restaurant on 2 separate occasions this week and quite enjoyed myself. I even phoned my good buddy Don Callis, in Winnipeg, to rub his nose in the fact that he was not with me. Life is good!

If Cracker Barrel wasn't good enough RAW and SmackDown were incredible! When I found out I would be wrestling a match on RAW I was ecstatic and when I found out I would, once again, be in the ring with Chris Jericho I became whatever is more excited than ecstatic. The match itself I wasn't very happy with, as I made a couple of small mistakes which I normally wouldn't

make, but on the whole it was still a great night. The ECW reunion/invasion was a great surprise and an awesome thing to be a part of live. I don't think anyone saw this coming and it has really injected some life into the WCW vs. WWF program. The Invasion PPV should be a historic must see event. I am dying to find out what part, if any, I will have in this show!

On Tuesday things got even better. Man I wouldn't have thought that was possible. I got to wrestle a single match with Jericho and cut an in-ring promo to boot. I was really glad when they wanted me to keep the "If I can be serious for a minute" line, and I've finally got a bit of an idea now what they want from me as far as my character goes. I will remain the no nonsense-wrestling heel just without the pro-Canadian anti-American sentiment. I was much happier with this match. More time would have been nice but with both of

us doing promos we had to make do with what time we had left. Hopefully the match gave people a taste of something they would like to see more of. It certainly gave me a taste of something I want to do more of.

That's it for this week. I will do my best to keep up with the site but please bear with me while I try to get used to my new schedule. I need to put a lot of time and effort into my performance at work and that combined with the road schedule will take its toll.

I'll talk to you again soon,
Lance

"The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"

July 19, 2001

This seemed like an appropriate title this week as I had a real mixed bag of experiences on my travels through far too many places. I traveled through 9 different cities yet worked merely 4 of them. I guess it will be easiest if I start with the good and work from there.

The Good: I managed to upgrade 4 of the 5 flights I was on this week, which is a pretty good average. With the amount of time I spend in the air each week, a first class upgrade is as welcome as Santa at Christmas. The Courtyard Marriott hotel in Waterbury,

CT gave me a great deal. Not only did they give me a great rate but they also upgraded (there is my favorite word again) me to a Jacuzzi suite. It's too bad I didn't actually have time to use the Jacuzzi (I guess you can't win on all fronts). I also had the chance to go to Kowloons in Boston. Kowloons is a Chinese restaurant that the boys frequent when in Boston. I had never gone before but Chavo and I headed there after SmackDown. I cannot recommend this place highly enough as the food and hospitality were, to borrow a word, TREMENDOUS!

The Bad: If you've ever been to this site before, or if you know me at all you can probably guess that the Bad has something to do with the travel. I hate traveling so much that I'm trying to find a way to spell it using 2 less letters because I truly feel that "travel" should be a 4-letter word. Because I live in the convenient (sarcastically

speaking) travel hub that I do, I had to leave for the Saturday house show on Friday (I couldn't make the show in time if I left on Saturday like the rest of the boys). To maximize my time at home I had the office book me on a red-eye flight Friday night (The WWF travel department people are so nice to deal with (no sarcasm here)). When I got to the airport at 11:20 pm for my 12:30 am flight I was delighted (again sarcastically speaking) to find out my flight was running late and I would miss my 7 am Toronto connection to Albany, NY. They told me that they could book me on the next flight out to Albany, which was conveniently (again Sarcasm here) at 4:30 pm. I told them that wasn't good enough, seeing that it would not get me into Albany in time for the show. My only other choice was yet another connection through Montreal and then on to Albany, so that is the route I ended up taking. All in all, airport-to-airport, it took

me only (last bit of sarcasm, I promise) 13 hours to make my trip. I don't think it would be fair for me to complain about the travel this weekend and not at least mention the traffic in Boston. OH MY GOD!!!!! That city is worse than New York. On our way to the Fleet Center it took us an hour and a half to go 10 exits on I 93. You couldn't pay me enough to live in a city with that much traffic.

The Ugly: I don't really have anything for the Ugly section but it made for a better title, sorry. Have a great week and I hope you enjoy INVASION!

Till next week,
Lance

Life in WWE

Next are 2 articles written about my early days in WWE expressing how I felt adjusting to my new work environment. While I do remember that time being a great experience, I think I was extra positive in the things I said publicly about the company starting out. One thing that really stands out to me in the first piece is when talking about my push I mention that the commentators were really putting me over, helping to establish me and giving me credibility, despite a losing record. The commentary team at the time consisted of Jim Ross and Paul Heyman and they did a fantastic job getting the talent, the angles, and the overall product over. Today in WWE Michael Cole is the main commentator and his heel persona

does far more damage than it does good, and he seldom gets anything over. The contrast is quite disturbing.

"Getting a Push?"

July 25, 2001

This week's commentary is inspired by a comment on my comment board in which someone commented on how I am being treated like a jobber in the WWF. The person went on to say how I deserve more and should be receiving a larger "push". I knew this comment would be coming as I have yet to win a match in the WWF. The thing that this person and many others miss is that there is more to a "push" than just winning matches. For the record my WWF win/loss record is 0-6-1 (prior to the PPV, I'm writing this on Saturday). Does this mean I am a jobber and not receiving a push? I don't think so. There are a lot of

ways of getting a push and winning matches is just one of them. For that matter a stellar win/loss record does not, unto itself, mean you are being pushed. Every match must have a winner and a loser, barring crappy no contest matches, which only serve to piss off fans. The Rock lost to Austin, at WrestleMania; does that mean he isn't being pushed? Of course it doesn't! I would rather be the loser in an important match than the winner of an unimportant one. I lost two semi-main event matches to Booker T for the WCW title, two eight man elimination tag matches, a match with Jericho and last week's match with Christian. All were good matches and with the exception of the elimination tags, important matches that had some degree of significance (either a title or an angle).

Another good measure of a push is how the announcers deal with your match and how they put you over. Announcers can

make or break you. In my two TV singles matches the announcers have worked hard to establish me as a heel and to get over my personality (or lack thereof). I owe them a thank you for that. Nothing says jobber, or don't pay attention to this match, like the announcers talking about someone else's angle during your match. The announce team is doing a great job of establishing me, and my character, which more than compensates for a few losses. Putting me over on Jericho would have been a huge mistake. Being in the ring with him is a push for me when you consider my level of exposure. With Mike Awesome going over on Edge on Monday, it seemed only right to have me put Christian over on Thursday. With one win each it leaves the door open for both teams on Sunday.

Promo time is another good measure of a push. Seldom in wrestling do you see unimportant people cutting promos and

getting mic-time. I have had the opportunity to do three in-ring promos, which is something very few WCW/ECW people have had the chance to do. At this point in my WWF career I need to establish my character and get my face on TV so people can get to know me and hopefully hate me. The WWF has given me plenty of this and with the exception of Page and Booker I'm now likely the most recognizable face to come in under the WCW Invasion. I guess my point is, don't get discouraged by a few losses; I certainly haven't. Being a part of the mix and getting exposure is so much more important than an impressive win/loss record. In the end I think fans remember the faces and names that get the most airtime and the ones whose matches they most enjoy. The WWF is more than doing their part in supplying me with airtime, and I will do my best at providing matches you enjoy watching. It's pretty easy when they give

you guys like Jericho, Edge and Christian to work with.

Till next week,
Lance

"WWF vs. WCW"

August 14, 2001

A lot of people have asked me how working for the World Wrestling Federation is different from working for World Championship Wrestling. There are of course a lot of little differences but there are a few big ones as well. I figured this week I could address a few of the bigger ones. First and foremost the road schedule is much more grueling. Having to work 4 days a week as opposed to 2 is a big adjustment. I am now away more than I am home, which is taking its toll on both my family and me. With the extra days on the road I find I am now more tired and sore when I get home and have far less time to recuperate. If it

weren't for my ability to sleep well on planes I would be burned out from exhaustion and fatigue before the year is out. With any luck at all my body will just get used to a greater level of fatigue and before long I won't even notice how tired and sore I am. You would be surprised what your body can get used to when it has to. My first day of camp I didn't think I would ever get used to taking bumps and now if I go too long without taking any my body aches.

My recognition factor has also gone through the roof. Of course as I write this sitting on a plane to Newark, the girl sitting beside me, Mandy, asked if I was a writer. I guess I'm not completely famous yet. Mandy aside, I do get recognized way more now that I am on WWF television. I can't go through an airport without being asked for an autograph and even people who I've been dealing with for years are now realizing what I do for a living (park and jet

attendants, guys at my gym, etc.). You need not worry that this increased recognition will go to my head because no matter how many times I get recognized the first thing I always get asked is do I know The Rock or Stone Cold Steve Austin. Now those two guys are truly famous. People always talk about the power of WWF television but you don't fully grasp it until you've experienced it firsthand. I can actually see that there will be a point when I avoid leaving my house just to avoid getting recognized and approached for autographs. My biggest fear is that I will have to stop going to The Gym in Calgary because too many people are interrupting my workouts. The owner of The Gym makes a great effort to try and keep people from bothering me when I train, but in time his efforts may prove futile. I know Bret got so big in Calgary that he couldn't go anywhere without getting mobbed. I doubt I will ever achieve his level of fame in Calgary

but the possibility of even getting close concerns me.

The biggest plus to working for the WWF is the working environment. In WCW there was no pressure to perform and with that no motivation to improve. The only drive I had was pride in my own performance, which was enough to keep me working hard but not conducive to real growth and improvement. In the WWF my work is under a microscope and there are a ton of very experienced knowledgeable people watching and offering me their advice. Everyone is so passionate about the product that you can't help but learn and improve. When you do things well there are a line of guys waiting to congratulate you for it, and when you do things wrong, and we all do, they are there to offer advice not criticism. Vince McMahon himself has met me at the "go position" to offer both praise and constructive criticism. Getting instant

feedback from the boss himself really makes you feel like what you do matters and is important. With a constant unified direction and being surrounded by passionate people one can't help but to improve. I honestly believe that my work rate and character should improve 10 fold over the next year. It will be a lot of work but I am very excited as to where my skill level and character could end up.

Till next week,
Lance

South by Southwest

Next is one of my favorite airline rants. Up until this point Air Canada had been the constant recipient of my verbal venom, but after my first trip on Southwest Airlines, all my previous complaints paled by comparison. Air Canada may suck, but they are head and shoulders ahead of Southwest Airlines.

"Southwest Airlines"

August 21, 2001

I know I've done more than my fair share of complaining about air travel, but this week was a whole new low for the airline industry. You would think after my Intercontinental Title match at Summer Slam that my match would be the big news of the week, but after the most abysmal flight, or more appropriately after a flight on the most abysmal airline on the face of the earth, I can't get my mind around anything else.

After the live SmackDown in Salt Lake City we had to fly to Las Vegas for a house show the following day. For this flight I had the unenviable task of flying on Southwest

Airlines. I had never flown Southwest before, and figured it would be like any other airlines. I couldn't have been more wrong. Southwest is, if I can borrow a few catch phrases, the worst, Rooty Poo, Candy Ass, Jabroni Airline I've ever had the displeasure of flying with. They should fly for Disney because they are unbelievably Mickey Mouse.

What makes this particular airline worse than all the others is its ridiculous check-in and seating procedures. Shane Helms once told me about an experience he had on Southwest and I thought he was ribbing me. Unfortunately he wasn't and this past weekend I experienced their archaic system first hand. I usually arrive at the airport fairly early. I like avoiding big lines and need an aisle seat for the extra shoulder room. I arrived at the Southwest counter to check in 2 hours before my flight and was delighted to see no line up

whatsoever. Perfect I thought; it would be the last time that word crossed my mind that day! At the counter I checked my bag and asked for an aisle seat. I was told that they don't do seat assignments and I would have to check in at the gate again to obtain a boarding number card. I must have looked as confused as I was because she went on to explain further. I had to check in again at the gate at which point I still wouldn't receive a boarding card. I would receive a plastic boarding number and they would board the plane in groups of 30 people with a free for all for seats. "A free for all?" I asked, "You mean it's like a big fist fight for seats?" To this she said, "Yes." I responded, "Oh I guess I'll be alright then!" This simply amazed me. Most people can't handle boarding a plane at the best of times let alone stowing bags and fighting for seats. To make things better once you get to the gate you have to wait for an agent to show up and by the time they

do, the line up for your second check in is huge. Southwest should hire cowboys and farm hands because they herd you like cattle. After the long line to obtain your boarding number card you then get to line up again, this time in groups of 30 for the boarding process.

They then take turns opening the gates on the groups of 30 and it's like you're running with the bulls in Spain! Everyone is in a mad dash to try and store their 3 or 4 pieces of carry-on luggage (the stated limit on carry ons is of course 2) and get the most desirable seat available. By the time the last group boards, things get quite ridiculous. All that is left are middle seats but people continue farther back on the plane in search of that elusive aisle or window seat that anyone in their right mind would know doesn't exist when you are boarding with number 117 on a flight with 120 seats. I boarded in the second group of 30 so with

minimal blocking from my good buddy Hugh Morrus, I got my desired aisle seat, as did he, without having to actually hit or threaten anyone. When they announced that the flight would be completely full (I guess misery does love company) I started looking for a skinny person to bribe to take the middle seat beside me. Unfortunately skinny people are always very rare during air travel. I'm not sure why overweight people tend to fly more than skinny people but that has been my experience. I ended up sitting next to a gentleman with a more than ample midsection and was completely miserable and uncomfortable the entire trip.

After this trip I've come to two conclusions. First, avoid flying Southwest Airlines whenever humanly possible. Second, God is either Canadian or at least prefers us to our American counterparts, as he saw fit to have Southwest Airlines only service our neighbors to the south.

Till next week,
Lance Storm

Travel

I don't think anyone can appreciate what the WWE road schedule is like without experiencing it firsthand. In some ways it's probably a lot like child birth. Okay I know that sounds ridiculous but hear me out. The WWE road schedule seems unbearable while you are doing it, but you somehow manage to cope and survive it, no matter how painful it gets. As soon as you get off that schedule there is an incredible relief and you can't believe you ever managed it, and you swear to yourself you will never do it again. Then there is that point you reach after being away from it long enough that you start to think in your head it wasn't so bad and you long to get back on the road and do it all over again. This next commentary will

give you a taste of how demanding that schedule can get.

"Travel?"

Sept. 5, 2001

I travel the world, yet I do not see it. This past week was the perfect example of this. Many people think that traveling and seeing the world is one of the huge bonuses of my career. While it may appear that way to someone outside of this business, let me assure you that isn't the way we inside the business see it. Granted, I have traveled the World. I've been to England, Germany, Austria, Australia, Lebanon, Japan, almost all of the fifty states, and 6 of our 10 provinces, but I haven't had much of a chance to really see too many of these places. This past week I work in Worcester, Ma; Halifax, NS; and Toronto, ON and didn't get

a chance to visit or see any of them.

For the Worcester show I had to fly into the Boston Logan International Airport, which most of you should know by now ranks right up there with castration and death on my list of least favorite things to do on a Saturday. I left my house at 5 am and arrived at Logan at 4:30 pm. Now that may sound like a long time but believe it or not my flights were on time. With the time change, layovers, park & jet, and check-in that's my normal flight day. The Worcester show was a 7:30 start which means I had to be at the building by 6:30. With baggage claim, rental car, Sumner Tunnel, and traffic to deal with I just made the show. I didn't even have time to stop for McDonalds drive-thru (which also rates on my list of least favorite things to do). I was at the show till about 10:00 then had to drive back to Boston, grab a bite to eat at Denny's (on the list somewhere between McDonalds and

castration), checked into the hotel, and crashed by about 12:30 am. With a day like that I didn't have a whole lot of time to experience Massachusetts, which is a shame because I have a friend from high school who lives in Boston. I talked to my buddy on the phone while waiting at baggage claim, got to experience a Boston Denny's, and spent far too many hours at Logan International Airport. Not exactly seeing the World!

Sunday was much better because it was my first trip to the east coast of Canada. I had never seen the Maritimes before and was looking forward to it. I even had another high school friend here offering to show me the sites. We had a charter flight in the morning, an afternoon show and a charter flight out that evening. We were in the city for less than 8 hours, 5 of which were spent at the building. If the airport had a covered garage for the buses to pick us up

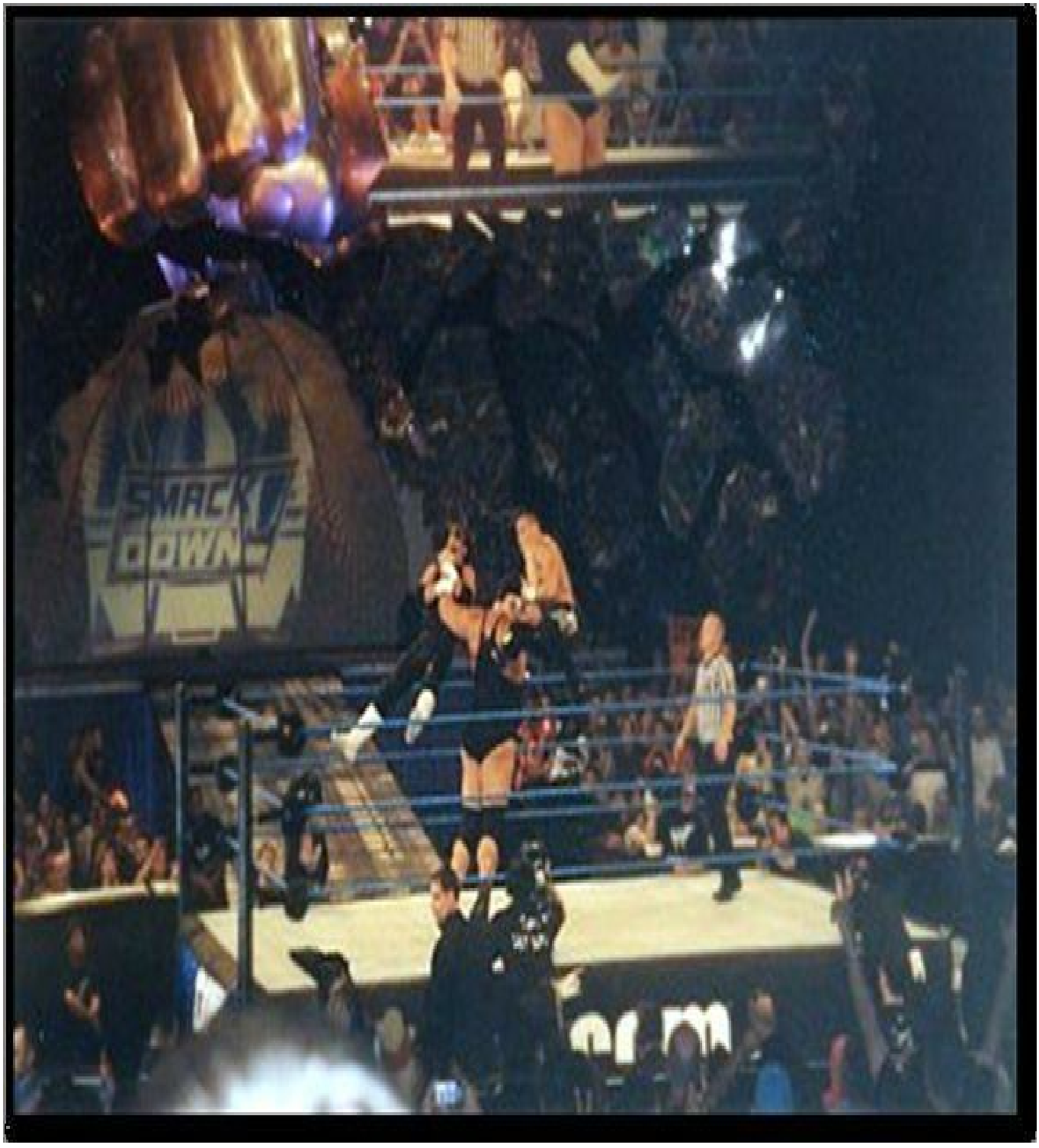
we wouldn't have even stepped foot outside while in the province. We were bused directly from the airport to the building and back again. We parked inside of the arena so the 10-20 feet from the doors at the airport to the bus was our only time spent outdoors. I didn't see or even talk to my old friend and other than the sites visible from the highway I didn't see a bit of the city.

Monday and Tuesday were in Toronto for RAW and SmackDown. TV days are busy as hell. We are at the building from 12:30 pm till 11:30 pm. Add to that a meal and a trip to the gym and you haven't got much time left, at least not if you plan on getting any sleep. I've got a ton of friends and family in the Southern Ontario area and had to ditch pretty much all of them. I managed breakfast with Jeff Marek and dinner with my immediate family late Tuesday night after SmackDown. It figures they'd make SmackDown instead of RAW so they could

see me get choke slammed in 10 seconds by Big Show instead of a solid match with Edge for the IC Title. There is no justice in this world!

Please don't take this as complaining. I just like to point out that while we do get to go to a lot of great places, we seldom get the chance to do great things whilst we're there. If "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" then it's being on the road which has developed my current character!

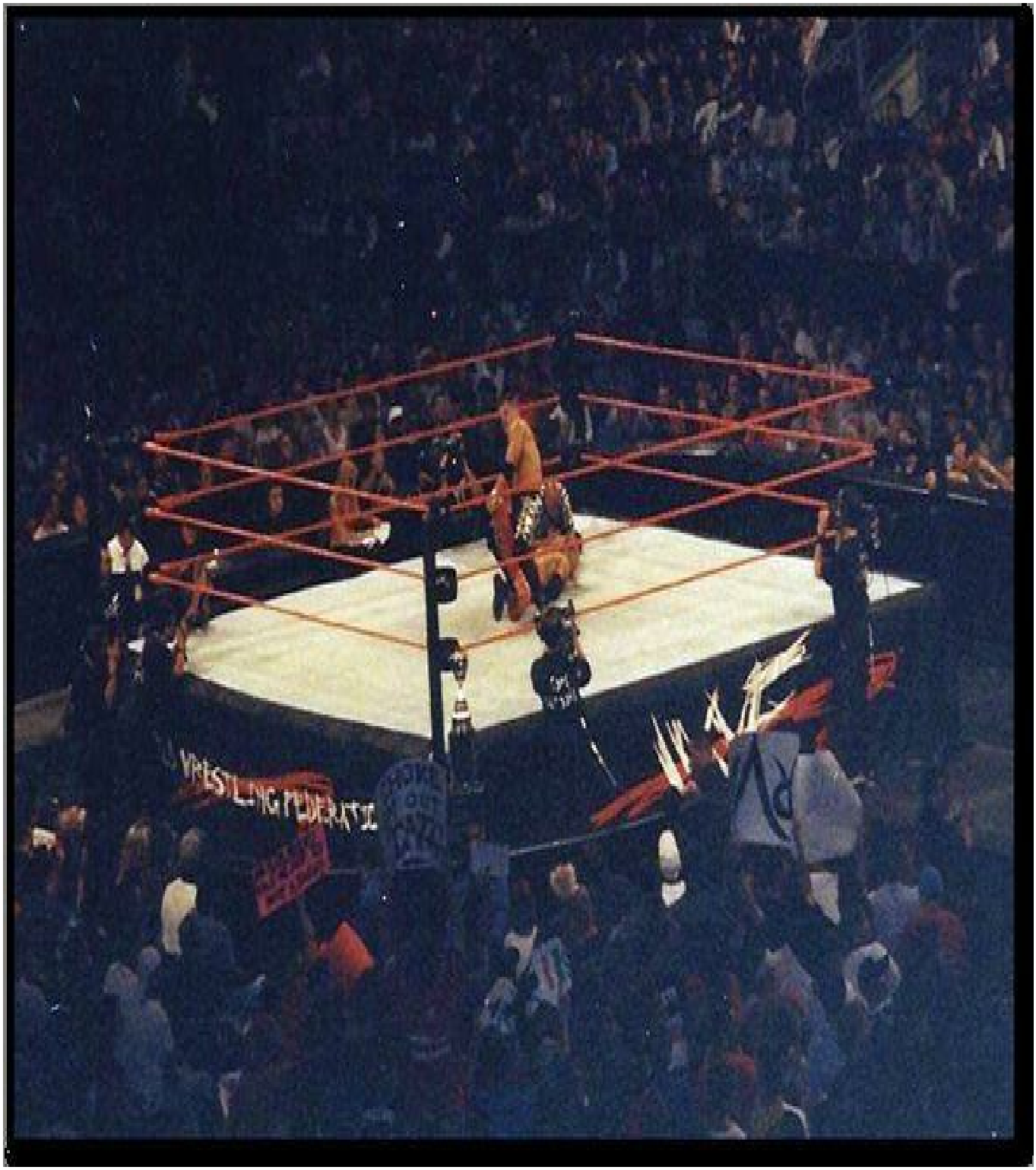
Till next week...What's up wit dat?
Lance



The Choke Slam on SmackDown my

family did see.

Note how much higher I got than The Hurricane.



Putting Edge in the Half Crab on RAW

which my family didn’t see

9/11

These next few commentaries really need no introduction or context to set them up. September 11, 2001 is likely the most infamous date in recent history. The following are the commentaries I wrote about that tragic day and what I was experiencing the week immediately following.

"Horror"

Sept. 11, 2001

Today (Sept. 11, 2001) was the most horrific day of my life. I am still in some degree of shock. My day started at 8 am (CST) with a phone call from my mom. She told me there had been a couple plane crashes. She likely gave me a few more details than that but I was half asleep and not really sure what she was saying. She apologized for waking me but said she had to call to make sure I wasn't flying and that I was okay. I assured her I was okay and told her I would call her back when I woke up. I hung up the phone and was intent on going back to sleep. As I lay in bed I started thinking about what my mom had just told

me and I realized it was pretty big news. I rolled out of bed and turned on the TV. I was completely horrified at what I saw. Justin Credible and I were sharing a room and after a minute or two of the news, he woke and we sat there in amazement. We both phoned our wives to make sure they were safe and to assure them we were okay as well. After talking on the phone we sat and watched the World Trade Center Towers crumble to the ground forever changing the most famous landscape in the world. I'm still coming to terms with what I saw today. Watching people die is something I hope I never have to do again and I can only imagine the horror of being there in person. Touching stories of people trying to reach loved ones during this tragedy have affected me deeply. I was moved to tears more than once today.

I don't think there has ever been a time in my life that I wanted to be home more than I do today. Not being able to hold my

wife and kids during a time like this has been very difficult for me. To make it worse I have no idea when I will be able to go home. As far as I know we are planning on doing SmackDown live on Thursday and I will likely be able to go home on Friday. With the chaos of air travel right now, even that isn't a sure thing. If I do get home by Friday I'm scheduled to fly out again on Saturday, which isn't a lot of time to spend with my wife and kids. I don't think there is a person in the world that won't be affected, in some way, by this terrorist attack. This is truly a global tragedy. I would like to send out my condolences to everyone who has lost loved ones today. The death toll is going to be frightening and I fear this is just the beginning and could end up starting World War 3. I hope I am wrong and I hope the people responsible are found and brought to justice quickly and something like this never happens again.

Lance Evers

"The Week That Was"

Sept 18, 2001

This will likely be a short one as I am tired, worn out, and ready to go home. I have been stuck on the road for 12 days and after endless hours of watching the news, reading through and answering near endless comments and e-mails, my brain has had all of this tragedy it can handle. I have analyzed, theorized, worried, fretted, and cried over the causes, effects, and likely reactions and repercussions of Tuesday's attacks. I've gotten to the point where I can't nor want to deal with any more of this. I am ready to just go home and ignore the world for a while. I know that burying one's head in the sand is not the way to deal with

things, but at this point I don't think a day or two in the sand with my family will be all that detrimental and it will likely be very therapeutic. While I am not completely sure I will be able to get home tomorrow I am optimistic that my chances are good. Those who managed to get home last week had little problems flying back this week so with any luck at all, I will get home to see my family. More importantly my daughter's birthday is tomorrow and I really don't want to miss that. I was in Japan the day she was born and I have missed too many of her birthdays already.

If there is a silver lining to all of this, it is the way people have pulled together in support of each other. PJ's (Justin's) company on the road, all of your comments and emails of support and well wishes have kept me sane. I may have been stranded on the road but I never once felt isolated or alone. As much praise as I received for my

words about this tragedy, both here and on SmackDown last week, I can't help but think I owe you all so much more. Whenever I have needed help in the past, no matter how small the issue, someone has always stepped up and come through for me. In what was likely the most difficult week of my life each of you, in your own way, has stepped up and for that, I will always be grateful.

Till next week, thank you!
Lance Evers

"Terrorism-Racism"

Sept. 25, 2001

As horrific as the events of Sept. 11th were, there is an aftermath that I think may be even worse in some ways. Sept. 11th was a terrorist attack against innocent people at the World Trade Centers, The Pentagon, and aboard the aircraft involved in the attacks. These attacks have affected us all and in the aftermath there is another attack against innocent people and it too affects us all. The level of racism being displayed and being acted on in "This Country" (I'm grouping Canada and the US in the term "This Country" as I feel both are similar enough in this instance to be considered one) has gone through the roof. The news is filled with

stories of Muslims, and people of Middle Eastern descent being threatened, being denied boarding to flights, having their places of worship vandalized and destroyed, and even killed. One story in particular stands out in my mind. There was a young lady whose kids were being threatened at school because they were Muslims. This woman was afraid of leaving her home and feared for her kid's safety. Her kids were born in the US as was she, her father, and grandfather. Both her father and grandfather served in the US military yet her family was still being discriminated against.

While I can understand the anger and fear people in "This Country" feel, we need to take a calm and logical approach to how we deal with our fear and anger. Can you be any more American than this woman and her family? Should not serving your country earn you and your children the right to be considered equal citizens, regardless of your

religion or ethnic descent? After all with the exception of Native Aboriginal Americans are we not all immigrants to some extent? Lashing out in fear and anger is never a good thing and when we attack each other are we not weakening our own country and defeating our own cause? If the terrorists' goal in their Sept. 11th attacks was to bring down the United States are we not playing right into their hands by attacking our own and fighting amongst ourselves? After the attacks the predominant message we have been trying to send to the world is that they may have knocked us down but we are getting right back up and we are pulling together as a country. If this is truly "The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave" should we not all have the bravery to not act in fear and deny others their freedom?

We cannot use the logic that if all of the terrorists were Muslims therefore all Muslims are terrorists. Timothy McVeigh

committed a terrorist attack in Oklahoma City yet we did not come to the conclusion that all red headed, white Americans are terrorists. We did not harass Ron Howard's, nor David Caruso's kids, nor should we have. In that same vein, we should not harass or terrorize anyone based solely on his or her religion, ethnic descent, or appearance. That is racism and the last time I checked that was not only wrong, but also illegal. People have died for "This County" and the freedoms it entitles its citizens. Don't dishonor them or their memories by violating the basic rights they fought so hard to protect. If there was ever a time for a country, and I mean a whole country, to pull together it is now. Those who lash out in anger and fear against innocent people are doing the same things, albeit on a smaller scale, that we condemned others for on Sept. 11th. This is a time for Bravery and Love, not Fear and Hate!

Till next week,
Lance Evers

"Airport Security"

October 2, 2001

I fly a lot (wow there is the understatement of the year) and thus deal with airport security on practically a daily basis. After the events of September 11th I expected huge changes in the security measures taken at airports. Surprisingly enough the changes aren't that big, or at least not consistently that much bigger. The biggest difference I've observed is the inconsistency among airports in Canada and the US. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the way in which they've "stepped up" security. Everyone does things differently. I'm not sure if this is just carelessness or if that is the subtlety of their

plan. If every airport does security different and the checks are all different and inconsistent there will be no pattern for Hijackers to follow, and attempts to smuggle weapons become more difficult. Some airports go through your carryon baggage with a fine-toothed comb while ignoring checked baggage, while others do the opposite. Some airports ignore everything and you zip right through. Some airports make me turn my laptop on to make sure it's actually a computer, while others don't even ask. I've always thought that the FAA had some degree of across the board regulations but I'm beginning to think not. While searches are not consistent, they do exist and some are completely ludicrous. The most ridiculous search I've been subjected to happened last week in Dayton Ohio, before my flight home. I didn't mind the search at the time (I'm trying to be as understanding as possible) but I've decided I will refuse

such searches in the future. They were hand searching all international checked baggage, which unto itself seemed fair enough. My problem with the search was the location and the ridiculous, time consuming, thoroughness of the search.

I checked one bag that day and this guy's search took at least 10 minutes. Had there been the full 40 passengers instead of the mere 5 of us on the flight his search could have taken upwards of 10 hours (40 people averaging 1 ½ checked bags each=600 min.). I don't even know what this guy was looking for. I would think (then again I'm not sure he was, so who knows) since the bag was checked and I wouldn't have access to it during the flight, the only thing dangerous I could have had in it was a bomb or something explosive. Knives or even a gun do me little good if I can't get to them. This guy took everything out of my suitcase. He ran his fingers along every edge and

seam of the bag. He tried to pull apart everything he could: the wheels on my suitcase, the plug on my electric razor, the handle of my hair drier (contrary to popular belief I do use one), anything bigger than a die. He even pulled the lining out of my suitcase. He ran his fingers along the seams of my T-shirts and jeans. I have no idea what he was looking for or what I could possibly smuggle inside the seams of my T-shirts, but this guy checked them anyway. This guy was incredibly paranoid to boot. I tried to straighten one of the zippers he didn't close all the way and he damn near bit my arm off, insisting that I "Can't have contact with the bag after it has been inspected." This guy's overzealousness wasn't even what bothered me the most, it was where he performed his search. The Dayton airport set up three folding tables (yes the ones like the Dudleys use, perhaps I can convince Bubba and Devon to put this guy through one if we

ever return to Dayton) in the front open area of the airport. Right in the front window where passengers are being dropped off and picked up, there was no privacy whatsoever, not even a couple of temporary office cubical walls. So as we stand there in the front window as if on display at a pet store this guy pulls out all of my belongings and clothing. Everything I have is pulled out held up and examined. I mean everything: dirty underwear, socks, toiletries, everything. I understand the need to search, but not the need for public display. Now for the most part people couldn't care less when someone else is having their luggage searched but being in the public eye somewhat, as I am, makes people notice and watch what you do. If I had anything embarrassing or inappropriate in my bag not only would people/fans be able to see it, they would be able to take a quick picture and have it in the tabloids or on the Internet.

If you don't think that can happen I guess you don't read the Globe!

Anytime customs or immigration searches a bag they do it in a private area. I suggest the Dayton airport, or any others performing searches, do the same. We may have to give up our right to privacy to some extent for security reasons, but there are limits and considerations that can and should be taken into account. If they do not have access to a private area, the least they could do is set up some privacy screens or temporary dividers. Too often people act in haste and overlook the obvious. The Dayton airport may mean well with their security measures but their lack of consideration for their passengers will deter people from flying in the future. When business remains low and they try to blame passenger paranoia caused by the September 11th hijacking, they need to remember how poorly they dealt with their passengers

(their customers) and shoulder some portion of the blame.

Till next week,
Lance

Hammer Time

Next up is a tribute commentary/obituary I wrote for a guy I worked with in one of my non-wrestling jobs. It was the best non-wrestling job I ever had and still to this day I keep in touch with several of the people I worked with back then. It's a great story about a great guy and it brought a smile to my face reading it again here; I hope it does the same for you. Rick was all about making people happy so if he does so again in this book, his memory lives on. R.I.P. my friend.

“Rick Applegate 1967-2001”

October 9, 2001

Every once in a while you’re lucky enough to come across a very special place or some very special people. I’ve had the opportunity to do both, and lucky enough for me simultaneously. The special place was a small bar in Calgary named Malarkey’s and the people were my co-workers there at the time. Malarkey’s was like a magnet for those of us who worked there. It continuously drew us all back together like a large somewhat dysfunctional family. I made many friends and even met my wife while working there (she bartended there at the time). Our dysfunctional family consisted of a vast cast of colorful characters.

There was our manager, Tommy K (a slightly fatter yet better kept version of Paul Heyman), Our DJ, Tommy Tunes, The Boys (The Doorman): Scotty (My best and longest running non-wrestling friend), Hammer (Rick), Biff (Jericho), Mad Dog, Fuji, Wedgy, Hawk (Ian, but I called him Bill (too long of a story to get into here)), Grizz (Kevin), Chang (Scotty's side kick (bus boy)), Hoop (see Chang), Turnip (another bus boy). Our Bartenders: Neil, Mo (Maurine), Bumbalina (Tina, my wife). Waitresses: Potty Mouth/Last Chance Chick (Teri), Bobo (Kim), Jen, Kim-Kim (we had two and she had no nick name), among a few others who passed through or doors over the years.

I bring up our little band of, if not so merry at least often drunken, merry men because this past week we lost one of our own. Rick Applegate (Hammer, to those of us who knew and loved him) passed away at the far too young age of 34. People often use

the expression, “To know him was to love him” but in the case of Hammer it truly applies. Rick had a heart of gold, and always put his friends ahead of himself. Rick was never the healthiest guy; he was always fighting one medical problem after another yet this never stopped him from constantly trying to help out and make others happy. Rick’s funeral was this past Friday and thankfully I was able to attend. Since Malarkey’s closed there have been few occasions for the crew to get together and as sad as the circumstances were for our reunion, it was great to see everyone again. Bobo sang a beautiful song during the service, and Scotty’s eulogy got all of us crying with his closing line, “When my time comes and I approach the gates, I hope you’re working the door.” After crying over the loss of our friend we sat around telling Hammer stories and laughing like crazy. At first it seemed odd laughing at his funeral,

but then I realized that Rick was always about making other people happy and he would have liked it that way. Even in death he found a way to bring smiles to our faces.

One of the stories we told was one of our company's Christmas party; Hammer of course played Santa Claus. He had both the build and attitude to pull it off. By the end of the night Hammer was hammered and since we lived only a couple blocks away I offered to drive him home. Rick owned a very old car, not broken down old but more of a collectable old. For some reason I think it was a Buick Skylark, but it doesn't really matter. As we headed up Southland Drive towards home we came to our first traffic light. As the light turned red I applied the brakes and proceeded straight through the intersection. It was as we came to a reluctant stop on the other side of the intersection that Hammer offers up this poorly timed pearl of wisdom: "You need to pump the breaks a bit

early because they take a while to bite." I thanked Rick for his advice and suggested it might have been a good idea to share that bit of info with me a bit earlier. Thankfully there was no traffic that night and we made it to Rick's safe and sound.

Rick was so drunk at this point he couldn't even find his house despite the fact that when he got out of the car he was standing in his own front yard. I pointed him in the direction of his front door and he began to insist on walking me home. He wanted to make sure I got home safe and sound. I knew that keeping him upright while we walked the 2 blocks to my house would be tough enough but the chances of him then finding his own way back were slim and none, and believe me, Rick was anything but slim. After a rather lengthy debate Rick agreed to let me make the journey alone, but made me promise to be careful. After thanking me 10 times for

driving his car I finally got him into his house. We had many good times together; it is a shame we won't have any more. May you rest in peace my friend; you were one of a kind and I will never forget you. You touched many lives and all are the better for it. You left us way too soon, but in some ways I think you still led a very full life.

Cheers, Hammer!
Lance

The Name Game

This next piece should be required reading for all aspiring wrestlers as well as any creative team member or booker who is responsible for selecting wrestlers' names. Picking the right name is very important and I don't think people put enough thought into this. I've had several of my SWA students get signed to WWE developmental and when they report to work they are all given new names. Most of the names given are generic and quite frankly not very good. Maybe I should send this book to someone in FCW; it might do them some good.

"What's in a Name?"

October 30, 2001

I've been asked many times as to the origin and reason behind my name, Lance Storm. I thought I would take a look at wrestling names this week, and why I don't think mine was a very good choice. It's no secret that I've never cared for my work name. I've always thought it sounded fake, which of course it is, but that doesn't mean it has to sound that way. There was a guy who played football for the Calgary Stampeders whose name was Storm but he spelled it Storme. If I had gone that route it would have seemed less fake to me and I likely wouldn't have minded it so much. I guess the question everyone is asking is, "So if

you've never liked it why did you pick it?" The answer to that is... I couldn't come up with anything better before I wrestled my first match and it just sort of stuck with me. I've always figured a good judge of a name was the frequency with which people use it. Everyone refers to Chris Jericho as Jericho. A mutual friend of ours, Brett Como, we all just call Como. No one, with the exception of Dallas Page, uses Storm when talking to or about me. Storm just never caught on. Popularity and fakeness aside, there are some good logical reasons as to why Lance Storm is a bad pro-wrestling name. First and foremost it can't be chanted. We've even discussed this a bit on the comment board and while it was less important when I broke in, fan interaction and crowd response is so important in today's wrestling environment. Wrestling fans want to be involved in the show and want to take part and have their voices heard. This is why

catch phrases and chants are now such a big part of this industry.

Having a good two-syllable name is a good start. It is very easy to chant HoGan… HoGan, while Storm…Storm… not so much. When I worked in Europe in 1993 the promoter actually dealt with this problem by adding the moniker "Tiger" to my name. As "Tiger" Lance Storm the crowd could cheer for me by chanting TiGer…TiGer. This actually caught on very well and most of the fans that remember me from CWA Catch remember me as "Tiger". The thing that was most interesting about having the Tiger chants is that I appeared to be so much more over with fans based on my newfound crowd response. Nothing but the name had changed so I don't think I was any more over. It's just the crowd had a way of expressing their support while taking part in the show. This opens a whole new can of worms in the name debate. With so much in

wrestling being based on how over you are with fans, having a chant able name or nickname is very important. RVD is a great example; the arenas filed with RVD chants when he showed up in the WWF and a huge push followed. Does anyone think Rob would have gotten such a huge push if the office didn't feel he was so over with the crowd? Now don't get me wrong; I'm not saying Rob doesn't deserve the push or that he is only over because of an easy to chant three-letter nickname. I'm just pointing out that having RVD to chant enabled the crowd to show their excitement for Rob, and this translated into the office viewing Rob as a legit "over" superstar. Three-letter names are very popular to chant. ECDub, RVD and Y2J are great examples. Jericho vs. Van Dam matches illustrate my point perfectly. Their matches are constant battles between RVD and Y2J fans, each chanting in support of their favorite as well as to combat the cheers

of his opponent. The fans actually compete with each other with their chants. I would guess that if it weren't for the Y2J moniker for the crowd to chant, Jericho would have been swallowed up in this feud. With Jericho as the face and an arena filled with RVD chants the assumption would have been made that Jericho wasn't that over and Rob was the bigger star. Jericho would have still been as big of a star but the crowd wouldn't have had a way to show their love for him, and he would have appeared far less over than Van Dam.

Wrestling crowds like to take part in the show. They will cheer for their favorites when they can, but they will also cheer to be heard and to have a voice in the show. The chants in ECW were perfect examples. You F---ed up, ECDub, She's a crack whore, etc. were more to get themselves over than they were to cheer for any particular wrestler. I guess my point, in all of this, is that crowd

response is not always the most accurate gauge of what fans want to see, or what actually draws money. I didn't draw any more money as "Tiger" Lance Storm than I did just as Lance Storm, but that is often the perception. In wrestling, perception often becomes reality so if there are any upstart wrestlers out there trying to settle on a name for themselves, think hard about a two-syllable name or three letter moniker of some kind. It could make a big difference in your career.

Till next week,
Lance Storm

Maybe Not So Retired

While in hindsight this next piece is way off the mark (it's about Sting's retirement), it is still a great story and my feelings on the man hold true. While I missed the mark on his retirement, I think the piece hits Sting, the man, right on. I was and will always remain a big fan of Sting the man and the performer.

From my one and only match with the Icon Sting

"Sting"

November 14, 2001

With the pending end to the WCW Invasion of the WWF this coming Sunday at Survivor Series, I can't help but think something very important has been overlooked: the retirement of Sting. Sting's March 27th match with Ric Flair on Nitro was the last of his career. I think the reason this has been overlooked is that many fans feel, or at least hope, that this is not the case. Hopes that he is in negotiations with the WWF or that he is waiting for his Turner contract to expire before joining the WWF keeps us in denial. While I suppose anything is possible, I'm pretty sure Sting's wrestling career has come to an end. No one was a

bigger fan of Sting than I was when I was a fan and after meeting him, working with him, and getting to know him, I've become even a bigger fan of the man behind the paint. I think a lot of fans have the wrong idea when it comes to Sting and his last few years in this business and how it pertains to his retirement, so I thought I would take this week to give you my views on Sting the wrestler and Sting the man. I've heard it talked about and debated many times, "Sting has lost his heart and his love for the business." This was such a strong rumor/topic of debate that it was actually worked into an angle in WCW when he was feuding with Jeff Jarrett. I know for a fact Sting was uncomfortable with this angle and after getting the chance to talk with him a few times in private, I think I understand why. Sting never lost his heart. WCW sucked it out of him! Sting loved this business and tried really hard to keep it exciting for both

him and the fans.

Sting has always been in a hot program or great angle. He did great things with Ric Flair, the Road Warriors, Rick Rude and Vader, all when they were in their prime and on top. He did the groundbreaking stuff with the Crow gimmick and the NWO. After years of being on top with great opponents, great angles and exciting matches he was then subjected to the trials and tribulations which hampered WCW in its closing years. He had to deal with constant changes of leadership and direction, lack of focus and lack of creativity. I don't think it was Sting who brought down the product. I think the product brought down Sting. I can't count the times that I saw Sting at ringside trying to come up with a big move or a new twist on a big move he wanted to do to try and make an impact that night. I remember talking him out of a few because I thought they were too risky. Sometimes he would

listen to me and sometimes he wouldn't. There was one night in Australia when he asked Kevin Nash and me if we thought he could take Sean O'Haire and Mark Jindrak's double beel from the floor up into the ring. We told him he was nuts and that he was too big for the move and asked why he would even risk trying it. He answered without batting an eye, "I'm just trying to find a way to help get these kids over."

That's not a guy who's lost his heart; that's a guy who loves this business and is trying to give back. Kev and I thought we had him talked into bumping for Sean's ridge hand instead, but against our better judgment he went out and took the beel anyway. He almost didn't make it and damn near killed himself. I can still see Kev's face coming out of the locker room looking for me, eyes wide as saucers, as we both screamed, "What happened to the ridge hand!" There was one other conversation I

had with Sting, which I think says a lot about what kind of guy he is. It was when we were in London doing Nitro. We were both working out in the hotel gym and it was just the two of us. I don't know if he did this with others but he sure opened up with me when it was just one on one. I hope I'm not betraying a trust by sharing part of this conversation but I think fans that lost faith in Sting deserve to hear this. We were talking about his career and his pending elbow surgery. He said that he wasn't sure if the surgery would even help and that there was a good chance his wrestling days were numbered. He told me he had about 1 year left on his contract and how he wished there was something new and exciting he could do to go out with a bang, but that he didn't believe the people in charge had the creativity to come up with something. We talked about how every time things would get going in WCW the people in charge

would change and then so would the angles and direction of the company. It was at this point that I realized that Sting still had his heart and love for this business, but that with every change of power within WCW he found it harder and harder to show it.

Sting gave us more than 10 years of excitement. He was never a Ric Flair/Arn Anderson caliber worker, but he always busted his ass and worked hard. He also never missed a chance to credit Ric Flair for making him the star he was. Sting was and is a class act and anyone who accused him of losing his heart and only being in this business for the money owes him an apology. I'm glad I had the chance to work with him the one time that I did and hope he had as much fun as I did doing it. Best of luck in the future Stinger, and on behalf of everyone you've entertained over the years, I thank you!

Till next week,
Lance

Big Heat

I'm about to get my knickers in a twist. While me going off on a rant is nothing new, going off on a fan is more of a rarity. As a general rule it's a bad idea to bad mouth fans; you often come off petty, and moreover acknowledging what the fan did to piss you off often just gives them validations and encourages them to do it more. I'm not sure if I had a bad week, or what pushed me over the edge, but on this particular week I reached the end of my rope. Instead of just hanging on to that rope for dear life, I decided to flog someone with it instead.

Enjoy

"Smark Reviews"

December 3, 2001

I know I shouldn't do this but I am going to go on a bit of a tirade about the Internet and Smarks. I will likely be criticized for being petty and letting this stuff get to me, but I just read something on the Torch website that has, to borrow a phrase, "got my knickers in a twist." My tirade is not directed at everyone on the Internet but those it does apply to, I believe, know who they are. When I got home last night I was curious to hear what was said about my house show matches this week with DDP. I like to find out what the general feel was to my work. Did they like or dislike the match? The review I read was the

epitome of everything that is wrong with Smarks on the Internet. I'm using the term Smarks to represent wrestling fans that think they know more than they do. They are people who have taken it upon themselves to review wrestling with a professional view they are not qualified to have. I guess I should start by giving you the review to read.

"5) Dallas Page defeated Lance Storm. Storm came out and cut a 3 minute promo saying that he had been in the WWF for 8 months and had been treated like crap because he was Canadian and berated the crowd for being American and his opponent for being American. DDP came out to 1 of the loudest pops of the night and said that he agreed with Storm that he wasn't born in Canada and that that wasn't a bad thing, it was a good thing. Page went to further the insult but was ambushed by Storm. Good technical match. The

finish was blown and had to be attempted again. Storm had 1 of Page's legs and was going to spin him around. He did and Page went for the reverse into the Diamond Cutter and Storm blew the spot. Page quickly reversed into a back slide, let Storm up, reversed a Storm headlock and hit the Diamond Cutter. You could see that Storm was mad and Page after the 3 count as he was getting up was talking to Storm and basically gave him a pat on the chest like "Don't worry about it." Page left through the crowd and we go to intermission..."

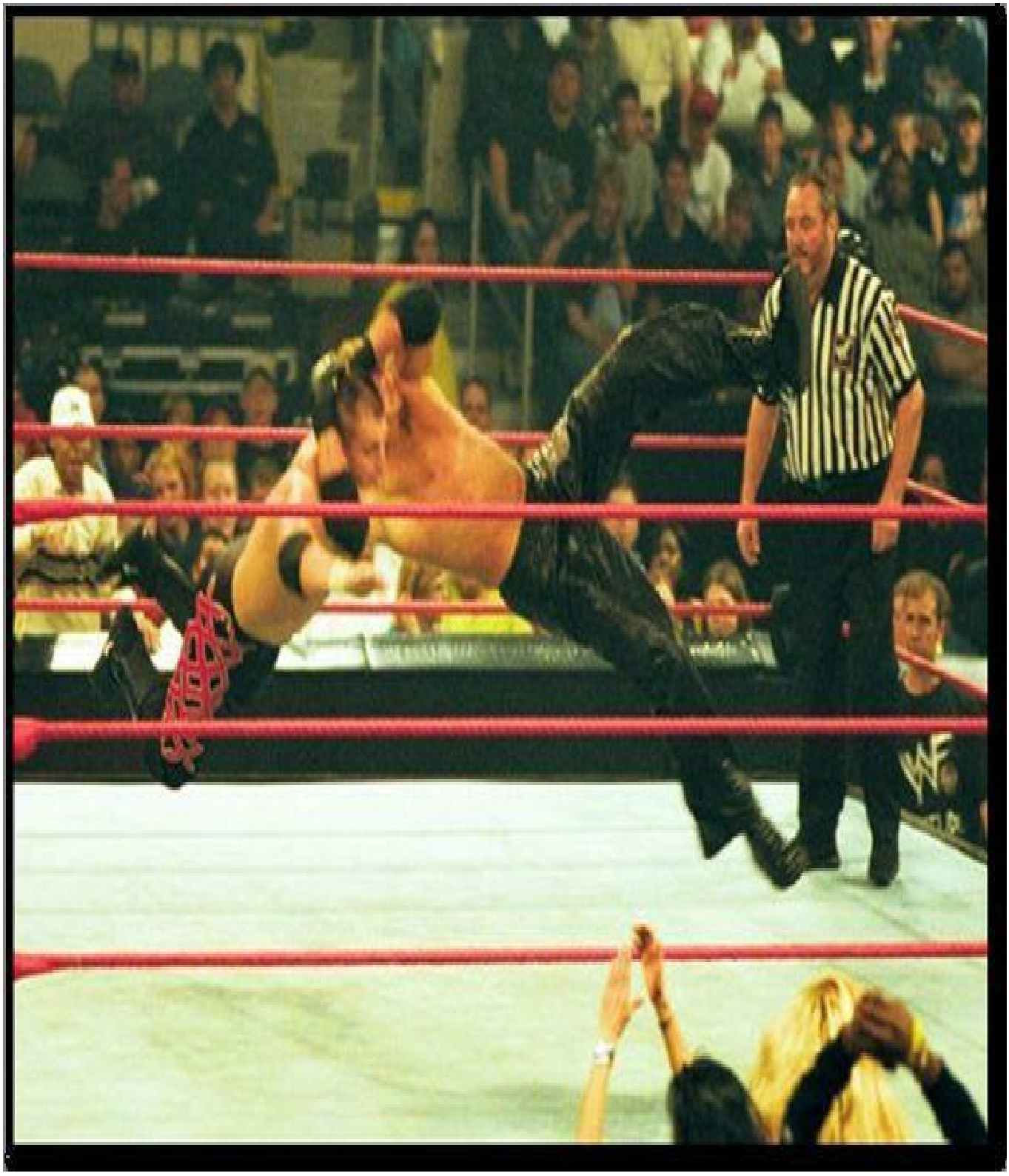
It's the part about the finish that has struck a nerve with me. For starters, the idea that the finish was blown is stated as fact rather than as opinion.. Perhaps Joe Reviewer here knows more about the match than I do. For some reason I doubt it, me being in it and all. The finish WASN'T blown! We did what is called a tease. Dallas

tried for his finisher, I countered, he countered, I countered, and then we came back to it. It's called "working." Perhaps my beloved Reviewer needs to go back to Smark School and brush up. Furthermore the finish had nothing to do with Page's leg. I never touched it during this spot nor did I ever have him in a headlock. Aren't you supposed to pay attention to details when "reporting" stuff? Perhaps not, it is after all the Torch. This is what we did for the finish. I went to suplex Page, he countered and dropped behind me. At this point he had me in a "slop-drop" type position. He spun inward to hook me for his cutter. I countered by continuing to spin and hooked him in a back slide. After fighting in the back slide for a second I released one arm and spun around pulling him into a short clothesline. He ducked and as I turned around... BANG, Diamond cutter. It's what we planned and what we did. If knowing more about my

spots than me isn't bad enough this guy actually went on to tell you how I felt and how Dallas comforted me after I blew the finish.

Truth be told (I realize we aren't used to truth on the internet, but there is a first time for everything) I wasn't mad. I was in a lot of pain. I've been suffering from very bad shin splints lately. As for Dallas, after the finish he rolled off of me, kissed me on the cheek and said "Thanks Baby." Dallas was obviously very happy with the match and it's common courtesy to thank the guy who just put you over. Perhaps Joe Reviewer, and a select few others, should just go back to being wrestling fans and enjoying watching matches instead of trying to be "Torch correspondents" and analyzing everything to death, especially when they do it incorrectly.

Till next week, don’t blow any spots!
Lance Storm



Taking the Diamond Cutter from DDP as planned.

Malfunction at the Junction

This next piece was an obituary / tribute to the great Ed Whalen. Ed Whalen was the voice of Stampede Wrestling and a really great man. I had only met him on a few occasions but it did not take long to like the man, and his death inspired me to write this tribute. It's hard to believe it has been over a decade since his passing.

"Ed Whalen 1927-2001"

December 5, 2001

I've talked about how great the city of Calgary is many times. It was the focal point of my character in ECW for over a year. I touted it as "The Wrestling Capital of the World", which it very well may be, but that is only a small part of what makes Calgary great. It's a beautiful, clean, friendly city. If you've ever been here you've likely heard Calgarians talk about "the Spirit of Calgary." It's hard to explain exactly what that "spirit" is but there is no denying that it exists. Whether it's a local tragedy, a charity fundraiser, or just supporting our local sports teams, Calgarians always rise to the occasion and lend a hand. There was one

man in Calgary that epitomized the spirit of Calgary. He loved this city, its sports teams, and he was always leading the charge when there was someone or some cause that needed help. That man was Ed Whalen and I was saddened to hear of his passing this past Tuesday at the age of 74.

In addition to being Mr. Calgary, Ed was also the voice of Stampede Wrestling. He called the action for Stu Hart for the better part of 25 years. Ed had a very unique style that may not have been as appreciated internationally, but if you were from Calgary Ed's voice meant wrestling. Ed's trademark lines of "It's a ring-a-ding-dong-dandy", "A malfunction at the junction" and his closing line of "In the mean time and in between time, that's another edition of Stampede Wrestling" will never be forgotten in Calgary. Ed was one of a kind and will be missed by wrestling fans and Calgarians alike. I first met Ed back in 1990. I had just

broken into the wrestling business and he was calling the action for CNWA in Calgary. CNWA had started up just after Stampede Wrestling shut down and they did a weekly TV taping at the Silver Dollar Action Center in Calgary. Ed called my very first televised match, and if I remember correctly it was Friday Dec. 28th, almost exactly 11 years ago. It was a terrible match that Ed somehow made watchable. Two weeks later I did my first wrestling interview and again it was with Eddie. I was teaming with Chris Jericho at the time as Sudden Impact. We had just won our debut match as a team for CNWA TV and Ed conducted our post-match interview at ringside. The match didn't go well and the interview wasn't much better but we were both really excited about working with the Stampede Wrestling Legend.

Apart from being Mr. Calgary and the voice of Stampede Wrestling, Ed was just an

all around class act and great guy. After the shows he would always come back to the locker room and chat with the boys. He was one of those guys that even if you had just met him he treated you like you were a lifelong friend. CNWA didn't have TV long. As a matter of fact I think that interview and three matches was the extent of my working with Ed. Our paths did cross one more time however, in a rather roundabout way. I got married in the spring of 1994. Before my wife and I could get married we were required to go to a marriage seminar. I think it was an 8-hour, two on one meeting with a marriage counselor. Oddly enough our counselor's name was Nomi Whalen, Ed's wife; half way through our session Ed showed up to bring his wife coffee. They had been married about 27 years at that point and still had the spark in their eye of newlyweds. Ed recognized me immediately and we spent the better part of the next 30

minutes talking wrestling. He asked how things were going for me and how Chris was doing. He was genuinely pleased that we were still working in the business and achieving some degree of success. I was amazed that after three and a half years he still remembered me. After all he had only called three of my matches. That's the way Ed was. He was a people person. He loved people and he likely remembered every person he ever met. I guess that's only fair because I can assure you that every person who has ever met Ed remembers him. Rest in peace my friend, Calgary will miss and always love you.

In the mean time and in between time, you will be remembered.

Lance Evers

"A Big Week"

December 19, 2001

It has been a pretty big week for me. It didn't look all that promising to start off but it picked up quickly. The reason the week got off to a slow start is that we were in Louisiana. I've mentioned before how Tennessee is my favourite state, well if I had to pick a least favourite, it would be Louisiana. Louisiana is best known for spicy Cajun food and large drunk fests. Seeing that I don't drink, party, or eat spicy food there isn't much that appeals to me here. I suppose there is the scenery but that's pretty much limited to swamp. For those of you who haven't been here, Louisiana is for the most part a giant swamp. Louisiana aside,

things went very well. I managed to hook up with a friend of mine who lives in Baton Rouge for breakfast at Cracker Barrel (always a good start to the week), hit the gym and head to RAW. As everyone should know by now I got to work with The Rock and more importantly won my job back Monday night. Yes, it's true. Almost 10-months after the WWF purchased my WCW contract, I am now officially a WWF Superstar. Working with Rocky is a lot of fun and with my victory over him (Albeit a somewhat shallow one) I now have a 1 and 1 record with the "Great One." Not too bad; I'm batting .500 with likely the biggest name in the game.

More important than defeating The Rock, my time in the ring with him made me the talk amongst the mothers in my daughter's kindergarten school yard. I think most of them knew what I did for a living but I guess until they actually saw me on TV

wrestling someone they knew, it didn't hit home. Actually it's amazing how much more I'm getting recognized on the street after just a few minutes of TV time with The Rock. My recognition factor had dropped considerably with my lack of TV exposure of late. SmackDown went very well for me as well. I won't go into details, as I wouldn't want to ruin the fun of you watching it tomorrow night. I can tell you that I logged a fair bit of very favourable camera time and I'm excited about seeing it back myself. I get to work with someone I've never worked before and I always enjoy the challenges of working with new people.

After SmackDown Edge, Jericho and I had a great meal at Bennigans on Veterans Blvd. in New Orleans. They treated us great and we had one of the better meals I've had in a long time. If you live in town, stop by and tell them Lance Storm said it was a great place to eat. The only real drawback to the

night was getting pulled over by the local police for an illegal turn. I was driving and Veterans Blvd. is a street with a wide median strip. We were coming off of a side street and needed to make a left onto Veterans. There was a break in the median that we thought was for left turns. When there was a break in the traffic I pulled out and tried to make my left. Once I'd committed and gotten into the median I realized that this wasn't a break for left turns but a U-Turn lane for traffic coming the other direction. Once in the lane I couldn't really back out as I'd end up back in traffic pointed the wrong direction, so I went through the U-turn lane as quick as possible and then did a short little U-turn of my own to get going in the right direct on this side of Veterans. Thankfully it was late and there was no traffic coming at us on Veterans. As soon as we were safe and sound going the right direction on the road, we got pulled over by

the police. I don't know whether he thought we were rowdy drunks or whether the police are just a lot more cautious in the States but there were 4 cop cars there in minutes. They made me get out of the car and even took and searched my waist pouch. Once they realized that I was a polite, sober, lost driver from out of town, they relaxed a fair bit. Luckily one of the officers, who was there for back up, recognized us, which made things a lot easier. After they ran our names to make sure we were "clean" they asked us to drive safe and let us go. A very eventful week capped off by good food, good matches, and no traffic tickets. Even in Louisiana that's a good week.

Till next week, I hope everyone has a great Christmas.

Lance

Death Clutch

If there was ever an article that took on a whole new life 10-years later, it's the one you are about to read. The piece is about the "What" chant that Steve Austin started back in 2001 and how it was taking on a life of its own. The chant has actually been making a comeback of late on guys like R Truth and Kevin Nash, but what amazed me about this commentary is that in the intro I just casually mention that on the house show loop I worked this guy no one had heard of yet…Brock Lesnar. In January of 2002 almost no one in the pro-wrestling world had even heard of this guy so I just introduced him briefly here and moved on. Since 2002 Brock went on to be WWE World Champion and later the UFC Heavyweight Champion and

there likely aren't that many people on the planet that haven't heard of him. Since everyone knows who Brock is now I thought I would take a few minutes and share with you some stories from that weekend.

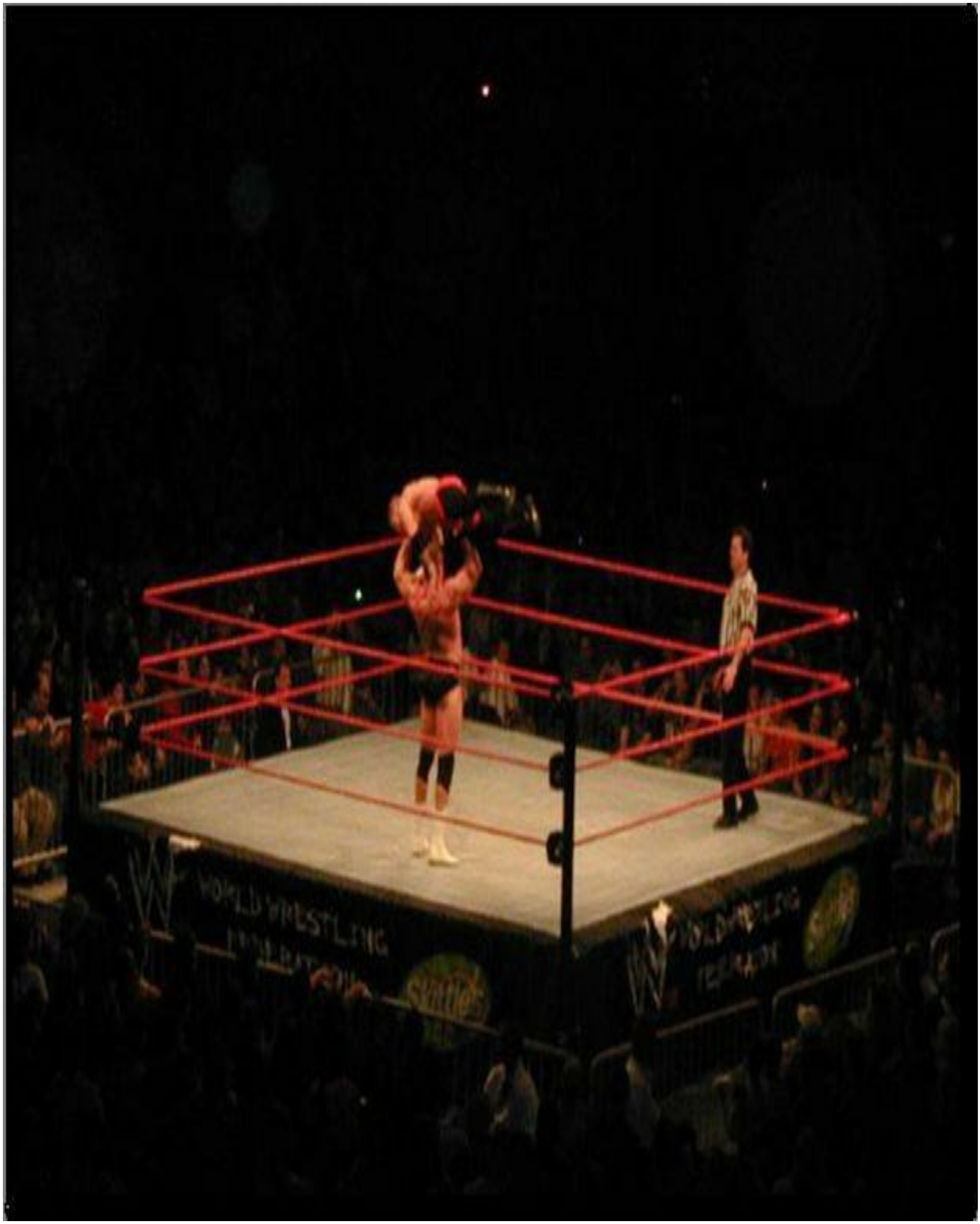
I worked Brock on three house shows that weekend and I believe they were Brock's first official WWE matches. My job for the weekend was to carry him to good matches and do my best to teach him how to work while doing so. At least, that was my understanding at the time. Since Brock was still a developmental guy I was to go over but since they had big plans for him they wanted me to cheat to do so. I really didn`t care and went out to have a good match. We had a long competitive match trying to cover all aspect of working to teach Brock as much as possible. Brock was great to work with and things I told him to change or improve on the first night he instantly fixed the next. Brock had an amazing learning curve and

was a very easy guy to work with. On the third night Jack Lanza (the agent that night) asked me to put Brock over. I had no problem with this and just made a slight adjustment in our finish to have Brock pin me clean. After the match Jack Lanza pulled me aside to criticize the match and I remember his reprimand like it was yesterday because it still pisses me off to this day.

As soon as I got through the curtain Jack grabbed me and said the following, "All that back and forth stuff at the end makes for a good match and all, but that's not what we are looking for here. We are looking to program him a certain way." This made me furious and had me biting my tongue with all my restraint, not wanting to get office heat. While I was biting my tongue I was screaming in my head, "I'm sorry I thought having a good match was the goal around here. If you wanted him to just squash me in

a shitty match, why the hell didn't you just say so ahead of time?" Seriously, I beat the dude the first two nights, am I just supposed to read his mind to discover they want a squash match the third time out?

Maybe I was overreacting but being reprimanded for having a good match and working competitively with a dude from developmental that hadn't even been on TV yet really struck a chord with me. Anyway, on to the "What" commentary with the brief Lesnar cameo...enjoy.



Getting press slammed by Brock Lesnar, in our first match in the series

"Too Over?"

January 8, 2002

After last week's look back at 2001, I was going to do a look forward to 2002. I came up with a different idea so I'll postpone my look forward till next week. It's not like 2002 is going anywhere. This past week it was back to business as usual for all of us: back to TV and back to house shows on the road. On the house show loop this week I wrestled Brock Lesnar. For those of you who don't know him, he is one of the guys the WWF has under developmental contract. He is a former National amateur wrestling champion, and has a ton of potential. None of this really matters however; the only real important part is that he's new. Since Brock

hasn't been on WWF TV yet most of the crowd wouldn't know who he was, so the office had me go out before the match and cut a heel promo to establish myself strong as the heel and help establish Brock as the face. I've done this many times and it's always been very easy. A little pro-Canada, anti-USA stuff and the crowd will cheer for any American coming through the curtain. This week it didn't work out that way. We still managed to get the desired response but it was far from easy.

The reason things didn't go as well as they always have in the past brings up the question, "Can something be too over?" It's certainly not me who might be too over; it's Steve Austin's "WHAT?" gimmick/catch phrase. This thing is so over the crowd doesn't just do it for him; they do it every chance they get. I think I was the first person to cut a promo that night so the crowd was just dying to say their "WHATS". Now I'm

all for crowd reaction and anything that makes people want to take part and come to a show is great, but let me tell you this thing kills everyone's promos, especially the heels. The problem is that the crowd is so tied up in getting their "WHATS" in that they no longer listen to your promo. Furthermore they are having so much fun doing it that it's near impossible to get any heat. My promo took twice as long and got half the heat it usually would. It was one of the most frustrating things I've ever experienced in the ring. It takes you forever to get to the point because every time you pause, the crowd chimes in with "WHAT" and even when you get to the point very few people listened to it and thus actually got it. When I got to the back after the match, I mentioned my dilemma to Jericho, who echoed my sentiment. He agreed that we are all pretty much screwed doing promos for the next 6 months to a year, depending on how long

“WHAT” stays over. I guess the only hope we have is that if there is a really important promo to cut, they make sure to send Austin out before it to try and let the crowd get it out of their system. Even that likely won’t work, because “WHAT” is so over the crowd seems able to do it all night.

It’s amazing how things take off and develop a life of their own. I still don’t understand why Scotty 2 Hottie’s “Worm” or The Rock`s “People’s Elbow” are as over as they are, and while I’ve always found Austin’s “WHATS” to be entertaining, I never would have guessed it would have gotten this out of hand. I’m still not sure whether “WHAT” is too over or not, but it’s definitely as close as you can get. Maybe I’ll be lucky enough (or talented enough for that matter) someday to have the problem of worrying about something I do being too over.

Till next week,
Lance

P.S. A little post script this week. I couldn't believe this one. Monday and Tuesday night in Madison Square Garden, NEW YORK CITY of all places, the crowd actually did "WHAT" to Lillian Garcia while she sang the American National Anthem.

A Refreshing Twist

For a change of pace, this next piece is about the good times I had on the road and the upside of traveling as much as we do. More often than not I am complaining about my travel woes, but that is not the case here. Looking back on it here now too, it turns out I was right in the conclusion/prediction I made at the end. As time passes the trials and tribulations fade from memory and the memories you retain are generally all the good ones. Reading this again now brought a smile to my face. I hope it does the same for you.

“Lighter Side of Travel”

January 17, 2002

I had a horrendous week of travel this week. So instead of complaining about it as I usually do, I thought I would take a look at the lighter side of travel. Everyone knows I hate traveling, but I have to admit, I have had the privilege of seeing a lot of cool places I wouldn’t have otherwise had the opportunity to see. I practically never traveled before getting into wrestling. Apart from a few car trips and vacations, and I mean very few, I had never left my home province of Ontario. The truth be told my flight to Calgary for wrestling camp in 1990 was the first commercial airline I had ever flown on. Eleven years and God knows how

many flights later I have been a lot further than I ever thought possible. I have been from one coast to the other in both the US and Canada, as well as Europe, Asia, The Middle East, New Zealand, and Australia. While I didn't get to visit and sightsee in all of these places I have seen and done some pretty cool things.

Vienna, Austria: I spent 7 weeks in Vienna, which is far and above the most beautiful city I've ever seen. The architecture of almost every building there was breathtaking, from the Vienna opera house, Stephansdom, the largest and most incredible church I've ever seen, to all of the beautiful monuments. The city was historic, beautiful, and even more importantly clean. I hope someday to be able to take my wife there to see it.

Climbing Sydney Harbour Bridge: Last

year with WCW we did a tour of Australia and during one of my only days off, I climbed the Sydney Harbour Bridge. There was a group of us who did it and I even wrote an article about it for WCW magazine. It was only a small adventure, but if not for wrestling an adventure I never would have even dreamed of.

Pigeon Forge, TN: It isn't as world famous as Sydney Australia, but it is a place I loved. When I worked for SMW in 1994 my wife and I lived in Knoxville, TN and we loved it there. It was a great city to live in and we were but a 45-minute drive from Pigeon Forge in the Smokey Mountains. I love the mountains, which is one of the main reasons I love Calgary so much and the Smokey Mountains were like a home away from home for us. If you've never lived by the mountains, you're missing out.

Swimming in the Mediterranean Sea: I did this during my ill-fated trip to Lebanon. I was there for two weeks and I was pretty scared and miserable the whole time. One of our only recreational breaks was during our first week while we were in Tier. A couple of mornings before our shows our armed guards took us to the beach and we got to swim in the Sea. It wasn't a great place to swim but it was a unique experience. The water was hot, very salty, and not that clean. On top of all that we got stung by jellyfish. Sometimes even the worst of trips have favourable memories.

Death Tour: Even death tour, which made Lebanon look like Club Med, is an experience I look back on in some favourable light. It was the absolute toughest and worst trip of my life but I've got a pile of great stories from it and again it was something not everyone gets to do. Who else but Don

Callis can say they had the pleasure (artistic license being used with the word "pleasure") of killing the town in Beren's River, MB.

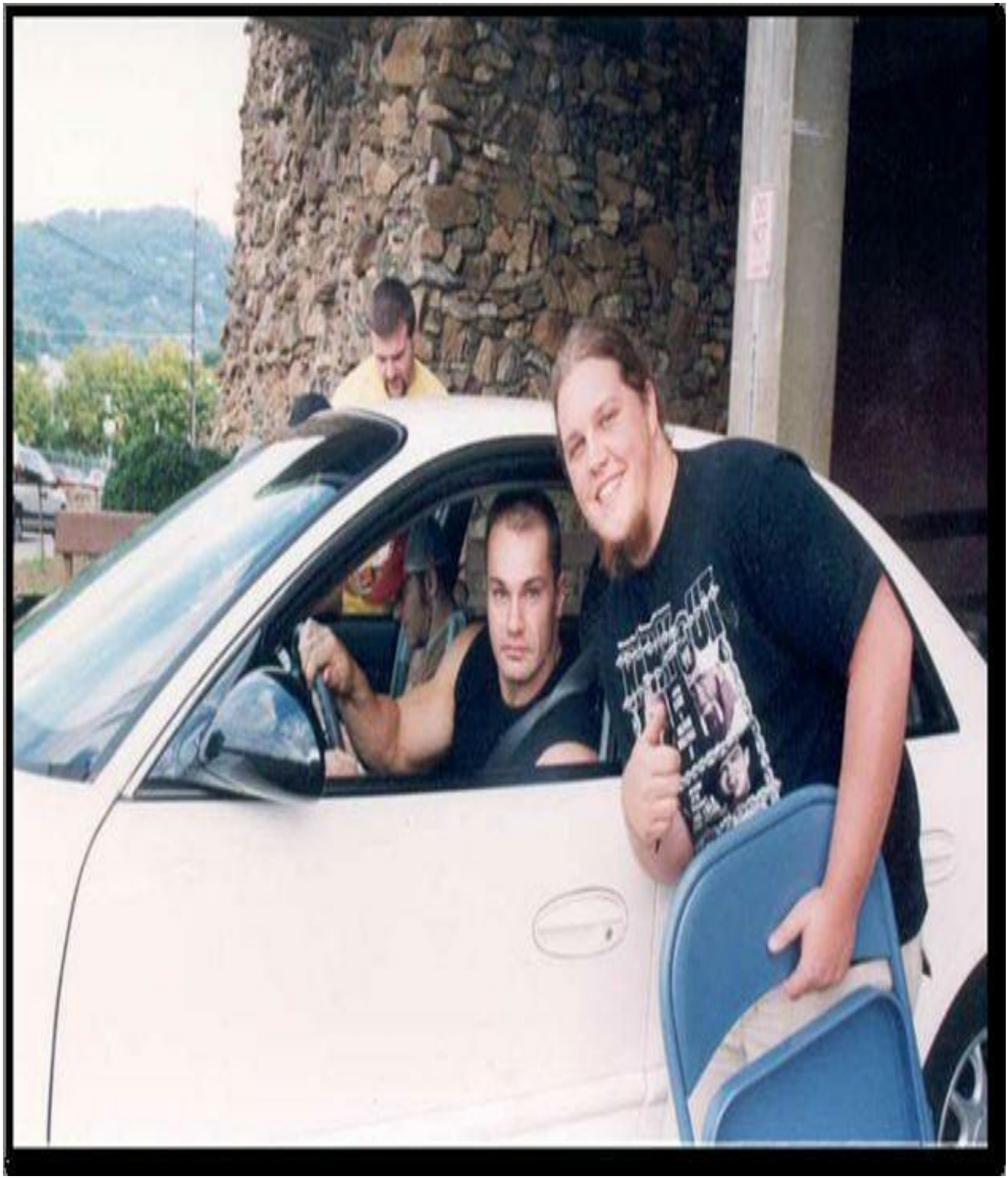
I guess the moral of this story, if there is one, is that in the midst of all of my complaining about travel there is a rather large silver lining. With every flight I board, every connection I make, there is another adventure that I am in some way fortunate to take. One must take the bad with the good, and hopefully when my career is done I will forget most of the bad (Logan Airport) and just remember all of the good!

Till next week,
Lance

Can I have your Autograph?

You are about to read, or more realistically re-read what is possibly my most viewed article. After writing this and posting it on my site, the WWE asked if they could reprint it in WWE magazine. If memory serves WWE magazine was doing a deal where they would print one small article a month written by a different WWE Superstar. Someone at the magazine had read my article and thought it would be a great addition to the magazine. I agreed, and the article was printed in WWE magazine. The piece was my how to guide to meeting and greeting wrestlers in public, which I think should be mandatory reading before fans head out to meet any athlete or celebrity. A lot of it is just common sense but

common sense is not always the strong suit of the autograph seeking fanatic.



Christian and I obliging a couple polite well mannered fans

They must have read the following article

“Rules of Engagement: A Fan's Guide to Meeting Wrestlers”

January 30, 2002

I’ve heard a lot of different accounts by fans of their first impressions of wrestlers after chance meetings in airports or restaurants. I’ve always found it odd that quite often I would hear accounts of rude behavior from guys who I personally know to be polite approachable people. I’m even more surprised when I hear glowing reports of meetings with guys I find to be usually curt and often unpleasant toward fans. This past weekend I had the opportunity to be a part of both types of meetings, the rude and the friendly. With both types of meetings involving, for the most part, the same group

of wrestlers, I realized that the mood of the encounter has more to do with the "fan" and the means by which they approach us than the mood or approachability of the "wrestler." It is because of this that I decided to give you my unofficial "Guide to meeting wrestlers." This in no way ensures a pleasant encounter, but it certainly should increase your likelihood of obtaining an autograph or exchanging a few pleasantries with your favourite wrestler.

First and foremost, have some manners and show us a little common courtesy. Don't interrupt a conversation, especially one over the phone. A lot of us use hands free ear pieces on our cell phone so take a good look before you jump in and start talking. There is nothing more annoying than being interrupted while talking to your wife or kids. Please, thank you, and excuse me are always nice. You'd be surprised how many people don't bother with these, and if you

are the tenth or twentieth person to interrupt without using any manners expect to be treated in kind! When you ask for an autograph actually wait for an answer before shoving a pen and paper in front of us. It's also nice if you actually have a pen and paper with you and don't expect us to be equipped on your behalf. You also have to realize that we are busy people and we aren't always rushing for the sole purpose of avoiding signing autographs. Quite often we get into town with barely enough time to get to the building and we are hoping to actually have a chance to get a bite to eat before going to work. To this end it is a good idea to not draw attention to yourself or us. Stopping to sign one autograph isn't a big inconvenience but if a crowd starts to form it's going to take 10-20 minutes out of our day that can mean the difference between getting to eat or not before reaching the arena. A hungry wrestler is an unpleasant

wrestler.

Photographs: under no circumstances take pictures of us without asking first. This is incredibly rude. No one likes having their pictures being taken when they don't know it. Ask first and have someone ready to take the picture before you ask. I can't count the number of times I've had someone ask if they can get a quick picture and then have to stand around waiting for them to find someone to take the somewhat less than quick picture. A couple minutes may not seem like a lot but when you take into account the frequency that this occurs it adds up. Restaurant etiquette: This is a big pet peeve of the boys. DO NOT interrupt us while we are eating! No one wants to be interrupted and asked questions when they have a mouth full of food. A good meal in peace is one of our few luxuries on the road. Get us before our food arrives or after we've finished our meal. If this means you have to

wait, so be it, it's you after all who is looking for the favour, be it an autograph or just a few words. You'll be surprised how much nicer we will seem if you extend us this courtesy. I've almost never turned down a request from someone who sat patiently waiting for me to finish my meal before disturbing me. Avoid looking for handshakes in restaurants too. I don't mean to seem rude but I don't really want to shake hands with a dozen strangers right before I eat.

None of this is rocket science, and I hope I don't come across like I'm complaining or talking down to anyone, but you'd be amazed how many times we get bombarded by people rudely demanding autographs and pictures. Believe it or not we enjoy hearing from fans and are flattered by the attention but it does wear on us and the more patience you can extend us the better. I've had great experiences and actually

stopped and talked with fans for 10-15 minutes and I've had experiences where I felt like I was an animal in a zoo being prodded to perform. Maybe after reading this and with the aid of a little common sense we'll have the chance to meet under pleasant circumstances and you will leave thinking "Hey, what a cool guy" and I will leave thinking the same.

Till next week,
Lance Storm

Hot Crowds

This next commentary is pretty self explanatory and doesn't really need any introduction, but there are two things mentioned in it that 10 years after the fact probably need explaining. I mention in the article the old "WCW Worldwide" wrestling show, which might be unfamiliar to some readers. Contrary to what the name might lead you to believe, Worldwide was the bottom of the totem pole wrestling show that WCW produced. It would be the equivalent of something between WWE Superstars and NXT. It was syndicated worldwide so it was viewed all over the world but it was far from the main show in the US so WCW creative put absolutely no thought into the show whatsoever.

Worldwide just consisted of a bunch of meaningless short matches. “Storm 1:08” is the other thing I mention that you might not be familiar with. Storm 1:08 was something that took on a life of its own that I’ve had to explain to people for years. I don’t know who started it exactly but I think it started on my old message board. The root of the expression was my first match at Madison Square Garden, which was an Intercontinental Title match with Edge. This was not too long after I had dropped the Intercontinental Title to Edge at Summer Slam, and this match was going to be my title rematch. I was very excited about the match seeing that it was also my MSG debut. Madison Square Garden is one of the most famous buildings there is, and my debut match in the building was going to be for the IC Title and against one of my best friends, who I knew I was going to have a great match with.

The match was on RAW and we were originally given a fair bit of time for the match, I think somewhere between 9 and 11 minutes. That was a lot of time by RAW standards, so we were both quite excited. In addition to our match William Regal was going to jump Edge on the ramp afterwards, kicking off their upcoming IC Title program. When they give you time for TV the time is for your entire segment, curtain to curtain, not bell to bell. However, even with ring entrances and the post match beat down we were still looking at 6 or 7 minutes of match time. By RAW standards in early 2002 that was still a fair bit of time. This is where it all fell apart. As was frequently the case back then, the opening promo segment on the show went extremely long so everything else on the show had to be shortened up. In 2002, Jerry Brisco was the guy who had to time out the show and he was always sitting in Gorilla (the spot backstage right before

you go out on stage) with a headset on giving time cues and adjusting for overages and underages while the show went on. As Edge and I stood backstage, Jerry was working franticly with his time sheet. Right before Edge was about to make his ring entrance Jerry looked up at both of us, and with desperation in his face said, "If you guys can get this whole thing done in less than 3 minutes you'd really be helping me out." 3 minutes for the whole thing: 2 ring entrances, an IC Title match, and a post match beat down? Yup, that's what he wanted. He was very apologetic and pointed out that we were right before the cross over segment (the segment going on during the 10 pm switch over, where fans might be switching channels from other shows) and that segment HAD to be in the ring on time. Edge and I were so disappointed to have our match ruined but we told Jerry we would be as fast as we could and do our best.

We all but ran to the ring to start our match and had the best shortest match we possibly could and got the entire segment done in less than 3 minutes. When we got to the back Jerry was so relieved and excited that we got him back on track that he actually got up out of his seat during the show to thank us. In the end our match bell to bell ended up being... you guessed it... or at least I hope you`ve guessed it by now, 1 minute and 8 seconds, thus Storm 1:08. Many of the fans who frequented my website were furious that WWE would beat me in a minute on TV and Storm 1:08 was born. If Austin 3:16 means, "I just whopped you ass!" Storm 1:08 stood for "You deserve better."

Storm 1:08 Lives

"The Fifth Element"

February 6, 2002

You've heard the expression "It takes two to tango" many times in reference to a wrestling match. This business is of course a "work" so it's up to both guys in the ring to get the job done. The truth is however it takes a lot more than that to really put together a great match. There are two opponents (assuming we are talking about a singles match), the referee, who can be a big help in a match, the agent or booker (assuming you have one helping with some ideas), and the Fifth Element, the crowd, which is what I'm going to talk about this week. The crowd can make or break a match. No matter how technically good a match is,

what really matters is the heat, and without the crowd response there isn't any. This is never more apparent than on house shows. On house shows you wrestle the same opponent a lot. We usually give all the cities the same matches. Since the matches aren't televised and we are in front of different people each night, we tend to do pretty much the same match each night. No doubt if you've ever checked out arena reports on-line, you've noticed that they are usually consistent right across the board.

We experiment and fine-tune the match a bit, at first, but once we find that smooth match it's easiest to just leave it alone and do it each night. This may seem lazy but if it's not broke why fix it? It's a new match for the people in the house that night anyway. So if we are wrestling the same opponent, have the same ref, and are doing basically the same match why are some nights great and others flat? It's that Fifth Element, the

crowd, YOU! When a crowd gets into a match everything becomes easier. The bumps hurt less, your energy level goes up and everything becomes better. Responsive crowds give both the heel and face something to react to and feed off of. It's a bit of an exchange. When you give us your all, it's easier for us to give you ours. Now granted we have to give you a show worth getting into, but to a certain degree you can feel the mood of the crowd before you even step through the curtain. You can lose a hot crowd if you aren't careful, but firing up one that starts off dead is near impossible.

Certain cities are known for their crowds. Canadian cities traditionally have hot crowds. I think part of this is due to the fact that the WWF doesn't come up here as often so the crowds are excited and hungry. Cities that we hit too often tend to have flatter crowds. The Cobb Country Civic Center in Marietta Georgia I remember being very

difficult. WCW used to do regular Worldwide tapings there, so the crowd had seen way too much wrestling and considering the show was Worldwide not a lot of those matches were worth getting excited about. I think this overexposure burned them out. Pittsburgh is another city which usually has a dead crowd. We go there a lot and it always feels like pulling teeth to get the crowd to respond. Oddly enough in my ECW days Pittsburgh was one of our hotter crowds. We always drew well in Pittsburgh so the crowd must enjoy the show. I guess they just aren't a very vocal bunch. Chicago is a great city on both fronts. We draw well there and they are always responsive. I've wrestled there in ECW, WCW, and WWF and I've always found them to be a hot crowd. Chicago is definitely a wrestling town.

I can't help but think that if a lively crowd makes this much of a difference in how

much I enjoy working, it has to also be a big factor in your enjoyment of the show. So let's try to help each other out. The next time you go to a wrestling show, leave your inhibitions at home, make up the most ridiculous sign you can think of and show up ready to scream and yell. Boo all of the heels and cheer all of the faces, or if you like the other way around, it really doesn't matter to me. Wrestling is becoming more and more an interactive event so if you guys do your part I can promise you we will do ours. It's really a win-win situation in that we all get to have a lot of fun.

I hope to see you live soon,
Lance Storm

P.S. Loved the Storm 1:08 sign in Vancouver this past weekend!

Wrestling Gold

Some commentaries are forgotten quickly while others seem to have true staying power. This next one had a lot of legs. It gets mentioned every few years and no doubt will again this year with the Olympics coming up in London in 2012. In it I discuss the possibility of Pro-wrestling as an Olympic event using the comparison to pairs figure skating. It's a comparison Bret Hart brought up a year or so ago and fans immediately pointed him to this commentary where I echoed his views. Although I suppose echoed isn't the appropriate term seeing that I wrote my piece well before his.

“The Olympics”

February 13, 2002

With the winter Olympics under way my comment board and mailbox is filling up with Olympic questions. I figured it would be easiest if I gave you my take on the whole thing here. Truthfully I’m not much of a fan of the Olympics. They’ve gotten too far away from their roots and have, at least for me, lost their appeal. To me the Olympics are Track and Field. There are a few other events that I like but it’s Track and Field that I consider the heart and soul of the Olympics. In an effort to grow and perhaps please everyone Olympic events have gotten ridiculous. You can win medals in damn near anything nowadays. You can be an

Olympic champion in pistol shooting, synchronized swimming and even ice carving, for crying out loud. Okay I'm not positive about the ice carving but I did see a piece on the news about a local ice carver who was going to the Olympics to compete and was hoping to win gold. It might just be a demonstration sport. Either way, it's ridiculous. Ice carving is art, not a sport. Come on, Synchro-Swimming? They do hair and makeup and actually get graded on whether they are smiling or not. If this were a real sport smiling and makeup wouldn't enter into it, would it? (And this isn't just my prejudice against events that require smiling (LOL)). People always try to justify Synchro-Swimming by pointing out how difficult it is and how athletic you have to be to compete, but that just doesn't cut it in my books for the Olympics. Changing your socks while standing on your head is hard as hell but it isn't an Olympic event!

Team sports create problems as well. It is actually possible to make the Olympic hockey team, go to the Olympics, sit on the bench, never actually compete, and be an Olympic Gold Medallist. Wassup Wit Dat!!!! Olympic Gold is supposed to mean you are the absolute best, yet I could suck and still win hockey gold as long as I was part of the right team! I also have a big problem with judged events, because it becomes subjective and inaccurate. This could be no more apparent than in this year's Pairs Figure Skating. For those of you who haven't been keeping up on your Olympic news, the Canadian pair skated what was widely considered a flawless program yet placed behind the Russian duo, who had a few minor bobbles in their program. There is a huge investigation going on and it seems there was some type of arrangement made between a few judges to protect their own countries' interests. As far as I'm concerned

this destroys all the credibility in this event and, quite frankly, any other judged event. This isn't just a black eye on the Games; it makes the entire Olympics seem like a big joke and a waste of time.

The winner of an Olympic Gold medal was predetermined, arranged, WORKED. WHAT! I said, "WORKED." WHAT!! I still enjoy watching Figure Skating but after these recent events, it raises the question could Pro-Wrestling be added as an Olympic event? WHAT! I said "Olympic event!" WHAT! This may sound crazy, but look at it this way. Pairs figure skating is an athletic endeavor in which two people go out and perform a predetermined sequence of athletically challenging maneuvers. Sound familiar? The two people out there are not competing against each other. They are working together to put on a routine, which is then judged on degree of difficulty, technical execution, and artistic

presentation. Would this not be the same as putting on a wrestling match, which is performed, judged and scored on technical execution, difficulty of the moves performed, and the overall heat and entertainment created (artistic impression)?

You would not crown an individual winner but award the Gold to the pair who put on the best match. If you consider one a legitimate sport I don't see why the same can't be said about the other. It's not as strange of an idea as you would think. I'd be willing to compete with Jericho as my partner against anybody. Get Bret Hart to coach and help choreograph. I say Team Canada wins GOLD!!!!!!!

Till next week,
Lance

With these jackets we look ready for figure skating.

In the Beginning

While I will certainly have to rewrite this and do a better account of my Pro-wrestling debut, this next commentary is a brief account of that important first night in my career. I was recently helping my mom clean out her basement and we came across the program from that first event. I've included a copy of the program but you should probably read the story first.

“My First Match”

February 20, 2002

Due to a family emergency I didn’t have time to write a commentary this week. I have never missed posting a commentary so I thought I would just cut and paste a bit out of the book on my career that I have been working on. Bob Puppets held his first show October 2, 1990 and called his new promotion The Canadian Wrestling Connection (CWC). He even managed to get a local cable access station to air the show. The event was held in The Moose Hall in Ponoka, Alberta. Ponoka is best known in Alberta for housing a large mental institution, which is rather appropriate when you consider the caliber of our show.

The Moose Hall was pretty close to full, but that only meant there were about 150 people in the building. Regardless of the size of the crowd, I felt like it was the biggest night of my life. It was after all the birth of what I hoped to be a long and prosperous career. I worked twice on the show.

I wrestled Chris Jericho in the second match on the card and took part in the Royal Rumble main event. In the first match Chris and I wrestled to a 15-minute time-limit draw and had a few pre-arranged spots but for the most part we just wrestled. I called most of the match because, at the time, I was a better spontaneous thinker in the ring. Our match turned out pretty good. Most people's first matches are terribly embarrassing but I can actually still watch mine today and not feel too bad about my efforts. Not only was it a decent match, but with the exception of the opener between Bret Como and Brad Young, it was also the best match on the

show. That does however say more about the caliber of the rest of the show than it does for the quality of my match. The last match before the Rumble, of course, featured the promoter Bob Puppets. Bob wrestled as Bob "The Judge" Bryant and on this occasion he wore a mask. He wore the mask because he was off work on workmen's compensation and did not want to be seen wrestling on TV. Like most Indy promoters Bob was a God awful wrestler who won all of his matches. Bob was a "healthy" drinker and in terrible shape and had a reputation for throwing up after all of his matches. When Bob made his way to the locker room after his match, Chris and I stayed close to him hoping to find out if his reputation was legit. To our disappointment Bob only coughed and spat while gasping for air.

Bob wrestled in a tag match so we figured that it wasn't quite strenuous enough to actually bring him to vomiting. We had all

but given up hope, when true to form Bob made his way to a stall in the bathroom and proceeded to puke his guts out. We both burst out laughing when Les Thornton, the only vet on the show, walked by and declared, in both disgust and sarcasm, that Bob was his candidate for "Athlete of the Year!" I ended up winning the Royal Rumble. I figured that they wanted a baby face to win in order to send the people home happy. Chris and I were the best-looking baby faces on the show so one of us was the logical choice. I was Ed's favourite so I always got the better end of the booking pencil on shows he was involved in, and was chosen to win the Royal Rumble.

After the show I was excited and relieved to have my first show behind me. I had a good solid singles match and won the main event, not a bad first night. Bob handed out pay envelopes and I received $30 cnd. for my efforts. I was more than happy with my

payoff and looking back it's kind of amusing that the promoter got to book Storm vs. Jericho for $60. It would sure cost a lot more than that today, but then again I'd like to think the two of us could now draw a few more people.

Till next week,
Lance Storm

Welcome Fans
WE ARE

CANADIAN

WRESTLING

CONNECTION

The fastest rising wrestling promotion in Canada

The Canadian Wrestling Connection was founded and based upon the fact that wrestling is a sport, a hard-hitting, fast-paced abundance of action.

After Stampede Wrestling and All-Star Wrestling (out of Vancouver) collapsed, the Canadian Wrestling Connection surfaced.

It is our full intention to give you, the fans, the full contact that is in demand.

"WE ARE"

What the Universe
Has Been Waiting For

Front Cover of the Program Somehow I doubt the Universe even noticed

ANNOUNCER: "Hurricane" Heath Brown

THE CARD

TITLE MATCH

JR. MID HEAVY WEIGHT

Best of 3 falls - 1 hour time limit

BRETT COMO		**BRAD YOUNG**
180 lbs	vs	182 lbs
Santa Cruz, Cal.		Penticton B.C.

30 min. time limit

RICK TITAN		**LES THORNTON**
265 lbs	vs	240 lbs
Houston, Tex.		Manchester, England

15 min. time limit

CHRIS JERICO		**LANCE T. STORM**
220 lbs	vs	225 lbs
Kasper, Wyoming		Toronto, Ontario

HAIR CUT MATCH

No time limit

RANDY RUDD		**STEVE GILLESPIE**
225 lbs	vs	205 lbs
Anchorage, Alaska		Calgary, Alberta

TAG TEAM MATCH

45 min. limit

EARTHQUAKE MALDOON		**"CAPITAL PUNISHMENT"**
and	vs	**Bob "THE JUDGE" Bryan**
LEE BARACHIE		**Shane Croft**
Comb. weight: 470 lbs		Comb. weight: 480 lbs

MAIN EVENT

THE ROYAL RUMBLE

Two men start the match, with one wrestler entering the ring every 60 seconds.
The last man standing wins a cash prize of $1000.
Cheque to be presented by The Office Pub

Special thanks to the Moose Hall
for their cooperation in accommodating this event

Back cover of the Program, My mom highlighted my matches

I never did get my $1000 for winning the Main Event

Janet & Alex Evanovich

Despite my Book Marks book club being a huge part of my website I think this next tale is its first real reference in this or my previous Storm Warning book. I wrote about the club at length many times but found for the most part that they were stand alone non-wrestling pieces so I opted to eliminate them from these collections. For those of you who might not be familiar with my club, Book Marks started after I received an autographed copy of Black Evening (a collection of short stories) from David Morrell. David was and still is my favourite author (although he has a lot of company in that spot now) and his generous unsolicited gift sparked a lot of book related commentaries on my site. After my online

friend Sara Tammer joked that I was becoming the next Oprah and should start a book club, I did. Start a book club that is, I did not become the next Oprah.

I developed many friendships with authors from the club and thanks to that even ended up getting mentioned in several of their novels. I've been mentioned in two Janet Evanovich books, am a recurring character in Marcus Wynne's Johnny Wylde saga, and the lead character in my favourite literary series, Repairman Jack, even wears a WWE Lance Storm t-shirt in the novel "Gateways." I've since shut Book Marks down, not having the time to keep it going, but there is still a Book Marks section on my website and it remains something I'm very proud of. The following tale was my first in person meeting with one of my Book Marks authors. We remain friends to this day and Tina (my wife) and I even attended Alex's wedding at Disney World in Florida. Below

is a photo taken at the wedding.

Me, Alex Evanovich and my wife Tina
The shinny thing behind my back is a cane, this was right
before I had my knees scoped and I used a cane
when I knew I had to be on my feet a lot

“A Plum Experience”

February 28, 2002

I had a rather unique experience this past week in Boston. Those of you who have known me and this site for a while may think this will have something to do with my love, or lack thereof, for Logan International Airport. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I had the chance to meet and have dinner with Janet, Alex and Peter (God I hope I got his name right) Evanovich. Janet is the author of “One For The Money,” this month’s Book Marks Book, and Alex and Paul are her daughter and son respectively. I got in touch with both Janet and Alex via e-mail after the big “One For The Money” Book Poll scandal. When I

found out they lived in the Boston area and were wrestling fans I offered them tickets to come see SmackDown. The three of them came to the show and we went out for dinner together afterwards.

It never ceases to amaze me how small the world can be. Thanks to a little bit of fame, the Internet, and my book club I'm sitting down to dinner with the author of our chosen book. It's always a strange situation meeting people that you met online for the first time, because you never know what to expect. I had seen a couple pictures of Janet but other than that had no idea what I was getting myself into. I imagine they felt the same as I did; you just have to hope for the best. You hope they won't be whacked out crazy fans that you will spend the whole rest of the night wishing you hadn't bothered to meet. Thankfully they turned out to be really great people and we had a great time. At least I did, perhaps they thought I was

the whacked out idiot fan and they spent the whole night wishing they ditched me after getting free tickets. We talked about books, wrestling, and the trials and tribulations of fame and being a celebrity. We also discussed the reviews that I've received thus far of her book. Alex was quite relieved that for the most part they were all positive. I think Janet deals with a predominately female demographic and Alex figured that my website dealt with a stronger male fan base and feared we would receive an abundance of harsh reviews criticizing her and their fan base for screwing up our original web poll (the aforementioned book poll scandal). Fortunately almost everyone loved the book, me included.

It's funny. I've been asked several times why I put so much time and effort into this website and why I bothered starting a book club, especially since I don't make any money at it nor do I have an abundance of

free time. I guess it comes back to the old adage, “What goes around comes around.” When you give of yourself, without looking for reward, more often than not the reward finds you anyway. I dedicated my time to this site and promoting reading via my book club and I’ve been rewarded 10 fold. I’ve gotten to know David Morrell (My favourite author) and I’ve now met and am getting to know Janet and Alex Evanovich (Janet quickly sliding in around the #3 slot on the favourite author list. I think my ego is preventing me from putting a lighthearted fun read ahead of a more heavy SERIOUS novel). Likely most rewarding of all I’ve received book reviews from people who’ve said they’ve never read a book before. You can’t get more rewarding than that!

Life is good!
Lance

Quoting a song from "Hee Haw"

These next two commentaries are actually one story, and are one of the main reasons I'm glad I have a website and wrote weekly commentaries during my time on the road. This is just an amazing tale of a truly disastrous weekend that I had almost completely forgotten about (I only remembered the vomiting part) until rereading them while editing this book. Life on the road in WWE makes John Candy and Steve Martin's exploits in Planes, Trains, and Automobiles look like child's play in comparison. Enjoy! It's way more fun to read than live through.

“Life Sucks?”

March 5, 2002

L a s t week I signed off my commentary with, “Life is good.” Well it’s amazing the difference a week can make, because this week nothing could be farther from the truth. If Murphy’s Law is, “Anything that can go wrong will,” Storm’s Law, at least for this week, is, “Murphy was an optimist!” My saga began Friday morning at 5:30am when I left my house for the airport. I got to the airport and as I was checking in at the ticket counter I realized that my cell phone was no longer attached to my waist pouch. Great! I haven’t even left the city yet and I’ve lost my cell phone. I’m hoping it fell off in my car but most likely

it's laying in the snow somewhere in the Park & Jet parking lot. Replacing the phone won't be that big of a deal but going a week without it is a huge pain in the ass, not to mention I'll have to try to get all of the numbers that were in my phone, which I didn't have written down anywhere else (Good planning on my part I know).

I connected in Denver this week on route to Tampa, Florida. I arrived a few minutes late but with still enough time to make my connection. As soon as I arrived at my departing gate they posted that my outbound flight was delayed. Great! My parents, who are vacationing in Florida, are going to pick me up and I don't have my phone to call them and let them know I'm going to be late. My flight was scheduled for an 11am departure and they kept bumping that time. They started by announcing an 11:30 decision time, which meant at 11:30 they would make the call that either the

plane's hydraulics problems could be fixed or they would get us a new plane. At 11:30 they announced a 12:00 pm decision time. At this point I realized I might not actually be making the 7:30pm Tampa show on time. I dug a calling card out of my wallet and phoned my wife. I got my parents' cell number from her and a number for the office. I phoned the office and let them know of my dilemma and asked them to contact someone at the show. They said they would and asked that I keep them abreast of my situation. I called my parents and let them know the same.

I started looking into my other options and found that other than this flight getting out, my only option was a flight to Orlando that got in at 7pm. With an hour drive and baggage claim I could likely make the show by intermission going that route. I was in the process of getting switched to the Orlando flight when they announced a 1pm

departure for my Tampa flight. I asked the desk when it would arrive in Tampa, and they said 6:30pm. Great I thought; I'd stay on that flight. I could get my bags and make the show by bell time. I phoned the office and my parents back and gave them the update. We didn't end up boarding till 1:30pm and didn't actually take off till 2pm. We landed in Tampa at 7:50. At this point I'm figuring, screw claiming my bags. I had my gear with me and I could come back after the show to get my bags. I found a pay phone by baggage claim and phoned my parents to see where they were. They were just coming around the terminal but said traffic was bad and they would likely be 10 minutes or so, so I could likely claim my bags. The baggage started coming up so I figured, sure why not. After 10-15 minutes the bags stopped coming and mine were still nowhere to be found. Great, now they've lost my luggage. They only had 4 hours to get my bag on the

plane and they screwed that up! I rushed to the baggage counter and found 3 people ahead of me in line and no one working the counter. I see a woman by the luggage belt and asked her if I could deal with my lost bag over the phone. She gave me an 800 number and I was out the door.

I saw my parents just pulling up so I ran out to catch them. They were in a king-cab pickup truck with the small half suicide type back door. I threw the door open quickly, chucked my carry-on bags inside and jumped in. WHAM!!!! I smashed my head into something and almost knocked myself out. It turned out there was this long piece of metal which stuck out at the top that the door latched to. The thing stuck out a good 2 inches and resembled the male part of a seat belt, just made with much thicker steel and I ran my head right into it. As we were driving along I reached up to see how big the lump on my head was and I found

out that not only did I have an enormous goose egg on my head, but I was bleeding. It was about 8:20pm, I was now sore, dizzy, beat up, and bleeding and I hadn't even made it to the show yet. Fortunately my parents knew where the arena was so we headed straight there while I dealt with my lost bag via my parents' cell phone. They said my bag was on a later flight and would arrive at 10pm. Fair enough; I could pick it up after the show.

We arrived at the arena and we pulled up to the private parking area for the boys. I gave my parking pass to my step-dad, who was driving, figuring they weren't likely to recognize him. The idiot wouldn't even look at my pass and had to check my name to his list and of course couldn't find my name. We had to take the list from him and point out my name. Finally the guy let us in the lot. I grabbed my bags and headed inside, only to be stopped by security and told I needed to

show my pass to get in the back door. My pass was in the car so I had to head back to the car to get the pass. Finally I got inside, got my parents set up with seats and found out that the show was in intermission and my match was first up after that. I got dressed as quick as I could and headed out for my match. My match went well enough and afterwards Arn Anderson ensured me that tomorrow would be a better day. I told Arn I'd hold him to that and left the show in search of my lost luggage. My bag was waiting for me at the airport, my parents and I managed to find a nice place to eat and I was settled into my hotel room by 1:30 am. Unfortunately I had a 6 am wake-up call so I could make my morning flight to Houston, so I only got 5 hours sleep.

I truly believed that Saturday would be a better day, as Arn had promised but that did not turn out to be the case. We arrived early into Houston and had a 2-hour drive to

Lake Charles, LA where the show was. We (Christian and I) figured we had time to eat, workout, maybe even check in, grab a short nap, and then head to the show. We hit an IHOP, which was right by the gym, for breakfast. I had an egg white omelet with chicken. After breakfast we hit the gym. About ¾'s of the way through my workout I started feeling strange. I finished my workout and we headed for the hotel. We checked in and had time for a 2-hour nap, which we both needed. Just as I lay down for my nap I started feeling worse and had to rush to the bathroom where I spent most of my 2 free hours sitting on the toilet. Once we got in the car for the drive to Lake Charles I suggested to Christian that it might be best if he drove. I wasn't feeling well and figured there was a chance I might need to stick my head out the window and puke. I didn't really think I would throw up but I figured no harm in playing it safe. Less than

an hour down the road I rolled the window down and stuck my head out the window for some fresh air and start throwing up all over I-10 and the side of our rental car. Vomit really splatters at 80 MPH, so we had to pull over at a gas station to squeegee off the side of the car and so I could clean myself up.

The general consensus is that I must have had a case of food poisoning courtesy of my IHOP chicken omelet. I got to the arena, informed Arn that he had in fact lied to me about today being a better day, and worked my match. Thankfully it was a tag match and I did as little as possible in hopes of not puking on either of my opponents. You might think it odd that I still worked considering my condition but I'm a bit old school and think that if you're at the building and can physically make it to the ring, you work. If any of you were there that night and thought my performance was

somewhat lackluster, you now know why. I did feel a lot better the next morning but my bad weekend wasn't completely over. This is getting far too long so I will end it here and perhaps I will delve into my fiasco in Austin, Texas and our attempts to find a hotel near the airport next week.

Till next week,
Lance

“Life Sucks?: Part 2”

March 13, 2002

I’ve got other things I want to talk about this week, but I kind of left you with a bit of a cliffhanger last week, which I should finish up first. As I left you last week I had just recovered from food poisoning and was heading to Austin, Texas with Christian in search of a hotel near the Austin Airport. We wanted to stay by the airport because we were flying out of Austin in two days and wanted to stay in the same hotel both nights. We didn’t know where the airport was but there are almost always signs off of the interstate so we figured we could find it. Sure enough as we reached town we spotted a sign for the airport exit and pulled off.

There was a nice hotel right at the exit so we figured we would try there and see what kind of rate we could get. We also had to make sure the hotel had an airport shuttle, because we weren't flying out at the same time. We pulled in and were relieved to see a shuttle van in the parking lot. We entered the lobby and a guy with the reddest most bloodshot eyes I'd ever seen came out from the back.

We asked him if he had any rooms available and what the rate would be. He replied, "I…can…put…you…in…a…room…for……..$59" (I'm using the "…" to emphasize just how slow this guy was talking).

I then asked him if they had an airport shuttle. "I……...don't…think…so." Now usually this is the kind of information people working the front desk of a hotel have access

to! Right or Wrong? Christian points out that there is a van in the parking lot. To this the guy replies, "……I…know…but…I…have…never…heard…anyone…say …it…goes…to…the……airport."

At this point we figured it would be best to find a different hotel. On the way out I took a good look at the guy and mentioned to Christian that I was going to check the local paper in the morning to see if any hotel clerks had been murdered. I figured this guy was strung out on drugs and likely killed the real front desk clerk and we happened by before he could finish the job and escape. Seriously this guy freaked me out. Fortunately there were no murders in the paper in the morning. We got back in the car and followed the signs to the airport. After about 10 miles I was getting worried and cussing the fact that we hadn't seen any more signs. Finally we saw another sign and

kept driving. After about 30 or 40 miles and a few more signs we were getting pretty hot. We found another batch of hotels and stopped to see how far we were from the airport and check the rates. We pulled into a Drury Inn & Suites. We asked the guy how far we were from the airport. He replied, "About 20-25 miles." WHAT, we'd been following signs since the interstate and had already drove 30-40 miles. Turns out that they moved the airport in Austin a year or so ago but hadn't taken all of the signs down for the old airport. "&@$&*@*& $^@)@)!@& **!@)(*)(*$) (!$&$^@" We were so mad!

We said screw the airport, we need sleep and it's getting late. If we were lucky we could get 7 or 8 hours of sleep if we stopped now. We got a good rate and got rooms. As I laid down to get some sleep I heard water running. It wasn't real loud, but enough to bug me and keep me up. I waited for it to stop but after 10-15 minutes it

didn't. I phoned the front desk and asked if there were rooms above me, because I heard water running and found that odd that late at night. He told me there was no one in the rooms above me, so there shouldn't be any water running. I told the guy there was, so he better check it out because it sounded like it might not be just running but overflowing onto the floor. He told me he would look into it but it might take him a while to get up there. 20 minutes later I heard the door to the room above me open and the water stop. Finally I could get some sleep! No such luck. No sooner did the upstairs door close and a car alarm in the parking lot started going off. Words cannot describe how pissed off I was at this point. I was running on no sleep, I still had a bit of a headache from banging my head and I wasn't 100% recovered from the food poisoning yet. It was about 3 am when the car alarm finally got shut off and I got to sleep. At 7 am the alarm in the room

next to me went off. Not the radio but the alarm setting: you know, the real loud annoying one. I waited for the guy in the room to shut it off. Again, no such luck, the room was unoccupied and the alarm must have still been set from the night before. How does that song go? "If it weren't for bad luck I'd have no luck at all. Blues, despair, it's agony on me." Any Hee Haw fans out there? Nothing can sum up my week better than that!

The amazing part is, after that nightmarish weekend I headed to TV, with practically no sleep and had that RAW match with RVD that everyone raved about. Looking back it's amazing I managed to put together any kind of match at all. I guess if necessity is the motherhood of invention, perhaps despair and agony are the motherhood of good wrestling matches.

Till next week,

A very tired, Lance Storm

"WrestleMania"

March 21, 2002

I've attended 5 WrestleManias in my lifetime: IV and V as a fan, VI as an aspiring, soon to be trained wrestler, and X7 and X8 as a worker. With that many Manias behind me, I still haven't had my first official WrestleMania match. Even without an official Mania match I did get the opportunity to physically take part and contribute this year. First and foremost the most memorable part was having the opportunity to get in the ring with the "Nature Boy" Ric Flair. Don't worry; you didn't miss part of the show. It wasn't at Mania; it was at SmackDown in Cleveland as part of Ric's warm up to WrestleMania. Ric

is the consummate professional and always striving to be the best he can be. In an effort to bump off some ring rust before Mania, Ric asked me to get in the ring with him in Cleveland before SmackDown. I of course jumped at the chance and had the time of my life.

I've always been a big fan of Ric Flair's work and since getting to know him I've become an even bigger fan of him as a person. Very few guys in this business like getting in the ring and taking bumps for free; so seeing one of the best ever in this business get in the ring and take a bunch of them says a lot. It shows me how much Ric loves this business and just how much pride he takes in his work. Ric could likely walk through a good match in his sleep, but just a good match isn't good enough for the "Nature Boy." Flair has always been a cut above and dedication like this is likely why. We ran some ropes, I gave him a bunch of

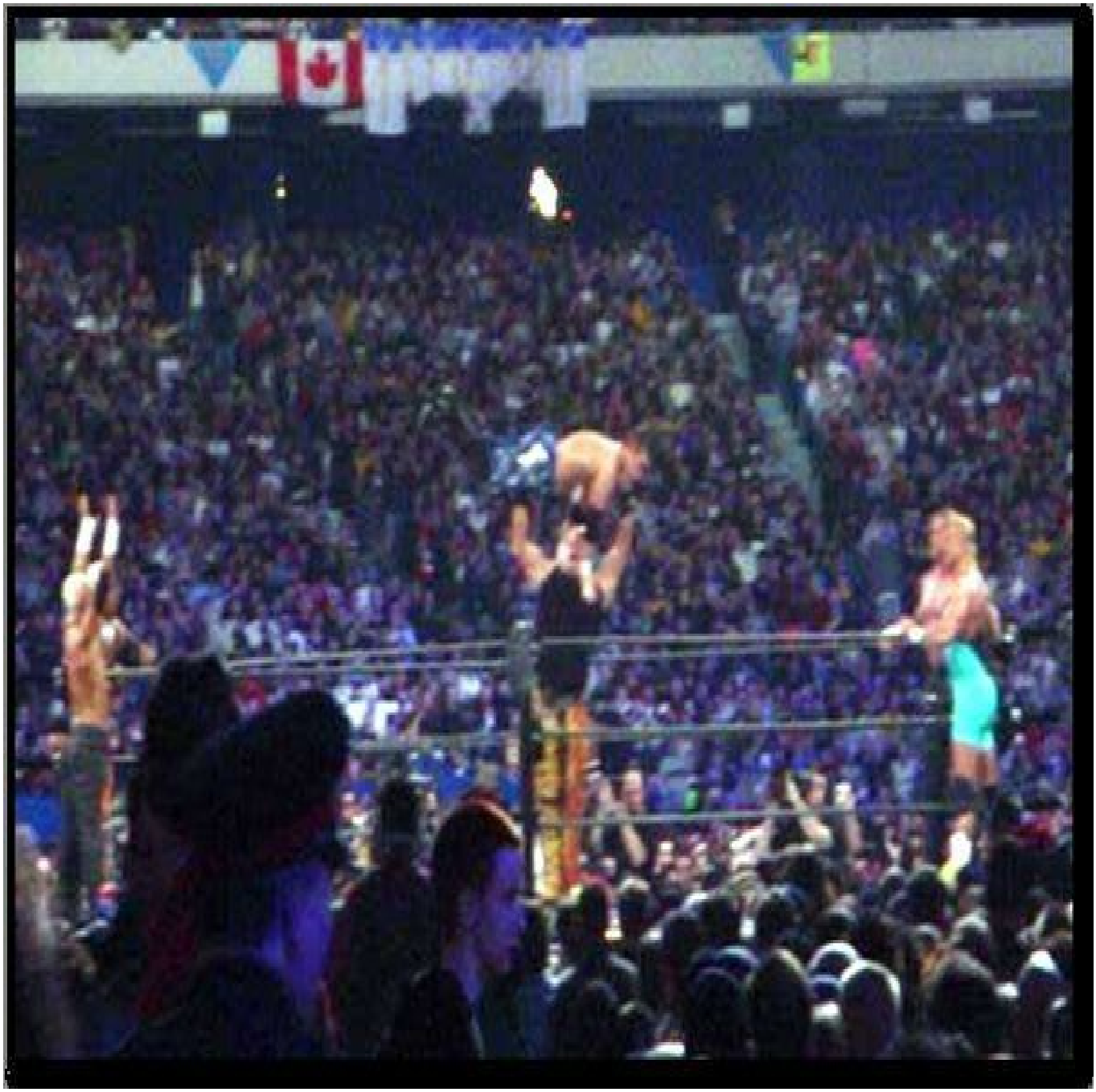
backdrops, a couple suplexes, and we even ran a few spots. It wasn't as good as getting to work an entire match with the "Nature Boy" but anytime in the ring with Ric Flair is time well spent. I felt honored and privileged to be in the ring with "The Man" and looking back having Ric Flair ask me to work out with him was likely the biggest compliment of my career. I don't know if this short workout helped him or not but on Sunday Flair, yet again, was a cut above. Like so many times before he walked that aisle, bled, sweat, and paid the price, and like the true professional that he is he did the job and his only concern was how it looked. If that wasn't cool enough, I also helped Edge prepare for his match. I spent part of Sunday afternoon in the ring with him practicing the Spinarooni. Yes believe it or not I attempted a few myself and let me tell you it's not as easy as it looks. I did a lot better than anyone thought I would and I

even managed to pull off a couple acceptable ones. For the record Edge pulled off a few decent ones himself during the day. Apparently it's a lot harder to do at the end of a match when you're a lot more blown up! (Don't try the Spinarooni at home kids. We're trained professionals. You won't believe the amount of places you can get mat burn doing that silly thing!)

In addition to my behind the scenes involvement in WrestleMania I did some in front of the scenes work as well. While I wasn't actually a part of the WrestleMania card I did wrestle in front of the live Toronto Sky Dome crowd as part of a 6-man tag team match for Heat. While this match may have been a short insignificant match to some, it may go down as the one in which I worked the largest crowd of my career. The 68,000 (I don't remember the exact number right now) people in Sky Dome were more than double and quite possibly almost triple the

largest crowd I've ever worked. Stepping out on stage in front of that many people was unbelievable, and receiving the strong reaction that we did was truly thrilling. Seeing a few Lance Storm signs out there made it even sweeter. I can't wait till next year and hopefully my first official WrestleMania match. Keep your fingers crossed for me.

Till next week,
Lance



Getting Press Slammed by Albert at WrestleMania X8 in front of 68,237 fans at Sky Dome in

Toronto

The Brand Split

This next piece was written on my birthday and deals with the WWE Brand Split. Seeing that this was approximately 10 years ago there is a chance that some fans won't even know what this was. Pre 2002 WWE was one big company with one talent roster which competed on both RAW and SD, much like they are getting back to now, despite claiming to still have two separate rosters. When WWE decided to do the Brand Split the roster was split in half with one group set to compete exclusively on RAW and the other exclusively on SmackDown. I was originally drafted to SmackDown but would later be traded to RAW where I would finish out my WWE run. The split

was very strictly adhered to in the beginning so it was a much bigger deal to us then than it would appear to be now.

“Separation Anxiety”

April 3, 2002

The tail end of last week and certainly this week, the ramifications of the “Brand Extension” of the WWF are setting in. I don’t think any of us fully grasped the absoluteness of it all. Now that the line is drawn we are all left looking across that line at friends/co-workers (Our second families). Last week felt very much like the last day of school when you were saying your last goodbyes before leaving for the summer, except we don’t know how long this summer will be. It very well could be permanent.

It took so long to set in that I didn’t even think of saying goodbye to anyone after

SmackDown on Tuesday. We had house shows Wed. & Thurs. and I never really thought about it. It wasn't until the last house show in Jacksonville on Thursday that I realized that I wouldn't be seeing the RAW guys this week. Kane was one of the only RAW guys on the Florida house shows so he was one of the only people I got to say goodbye to. I may not have even thought to say goodbye to him if Jericho hadn't brought it to my attention.

Jericho and Kane are good friends and as a last farewell Jericho (completely unannounced or preplanned) ran in on Kane's match in Jacksonville. Kane was in the Main Event with Kurt Angle and just after the finish Chris hit the ring and was met with one last Choke Slam from the Big Red Machine. They hit the locker room laughing and joking but in spite of the laughter it was a sad time. Our family has being cut in half. I don't know when I will

be seeing guys like Kane, Justin Credible, The Hardys, Lita, or Ric Flair again. Well I guess that isn't completely true. For now anyway, I will see them one Sunday a month for PPVs. One day a month isn't much when you are used to seeing them 4 days a week. I see most of these guys more than I do my wife and kids, so all of a sudden only seeing them once a month is going to be a big adjustment. Personal issues aside, this is a job and I think this will be good for all of our careers, but that doesn't make it any easier. Even ignoring friendships, travel partners are at stake. I'm really fortunate in that I've been traveling with Edge and/or Christian of late, so my travel plans don't need to change but there are some guys (Kane for example) whose regular travel partner for the last 5 years is on the other side of the division and they will have to start all over with new travel partners. Good travel partners are hard to come by and starting

over is a big deal. When you travel as much as we do it's hard to find someone you're compatible with. Between the aches and pains of wrestling and the trials and tribulations of traveling, which I often go on about in commentaries, it's hard to find people you can put up with, or more appropriately, can put up with you, over the long haul.

Hardships are nothing new to any of us; we've been paying dues since the day we broke in and we will continue to do so. We are professionals and will rise above it. The one saving grace is that whenever you and a friend go your separate paths in this business, your paths always find a way to cross again down the road. It's been my experience that whether it be a month, a year, or 10 years, the boys always manage to pick right back up where they left off. Jericho and I have had our paths part and converge 5 or 6 times over our 12-year

careers and we have always remained friends. I don't see why the same won't be true of those whom I am parting paths with now!

Best of luck everyone! I look forward to our paths crossing in the future.

Lance

Brand Split, Supplemental

There is one other element to the brand split story, which I avoided at the time because the office liked to keep behind the scenes stories quiet. Seeing that is now more than a decade removed I figure its fair game. WWE was very concerned with keeping all the details of the Brand Split very quiet; they were almost paranoid in their efforts to keep who would end up on which Brand from leaking to the Internet. To accomplish this they had a big meeting before the show instructing all of us that they would not be telling any of us ahead of time where we would end up in the draft. They would do the on air drafts like they were real and we were all just to react naturally on camera when we found out the results live on air

with the audience.

If there was a certain reaction they needed from a drafted party they would simply pull that person aside a couple minutes before the segment and give them the heads up then. I found this a little insulting because they were basically saying they figured leaks were coming from the boys, but at the end of the day what difference did it make if I found out that afternoon or that night? They went on to explain that after the top draft picks were done live on the show the rest of the results would be posted on WWE.com in hopes of driving fans to the website. To this I asked, how those who weren't drafted on the live show were to find out which brand we would be drafted to. Their response was, "You are welcome to go to WWE.com to find out."

WHAT? Yes I kid you not; we were told we could go to the website to find out which

show we would be working on. Keep in mind this would affect our future road schedule, which days off we had at home with our families, and who our future travel partners might be; and we were expected to go to the website like the fans do to find out our fate. To make matters worse, this was before smart phones and we had a 200 mile drive to do that night. I couldn't believe the office wouldn't at least post a list on the door at the end of the night so we could determine our fate before hitting the road. Did they really think spoilers at that point would damage web traffic?

Edge, Christian , and I were traveling together that night so in order to find out which show we were now, we had to call our mutual friend Len (Dr. Luther) who lives on the west coast and would still be up, and ask him to go online to WWE.com and find out which show we were drafted to.

An Eye Opener

This next piece brought back some bad memories, and I'm amazed I'd ever managed to put it out of my head. This is quite probably the most serious and personal commentary I've written and it makes me sad just reading it again now. On the upside, I know for a fact my kids have no recollection of this time in their lives, because we've talked about my days on the road and neither of them have much if any recollection of my time on the road. For anyone who asks why I'm not wrestling now or why I walked away when I did, this next commentary will give you a good understanding. Life in WWE for me was about Reward vs. Sacrifice. Once the Sacrifice started to outweigh the Reward, it

was time for me to pack it in. I lasted on the road for a couple years after this, but this was when I realized I needed to keep my eye on the scale and make sure I noticed when it starts to tip in the wrong direction.

"Priorities"

April 24, 2002

I came to a rather horrific realization this past week. The realization itself wasn't all that horrific but the consequences of it were. My priorities have gotten a bit out of whack. I'm the kind of person who once I start something never quits. If I'm going to do something I like to go all the way and do it right. While I'd like to think this is an admirable quality, perhaps in this case it isn't completely. I have several things going on in my life that are very important to me: my job, this website, my family, etc. With my schedule being so busy I've been burning the candle at both ends, if you will, to keep up. I thought I was holding everything

together and coping fairly well. I knew I was exhausted and tired all of the time, but I figured I could deal with that. As is often in life, things were not as they seemed. I am a chronic planner: I make lists, I schedule things, and I like to be organized. Every week I have, in the back of my mind, and often written on pieces of paper, lists of things I need to do. Things such as work out, do cardio, book rental cars, post commentary, update comment board, and pack for work. Once something makes my list, I'll be damned if it doesn't get done. Hell, I haven't missed a commentary since starting this site over 2-years ago. This is where we start to get to the root of the problem. My family seldom has a specific task assigned to it, and thus doesn't fit easily onto a list. It often ends up being what I do with whatever time I have left after I get caught up with my mental lists (I think now you are beginning to see where I am going

with this).

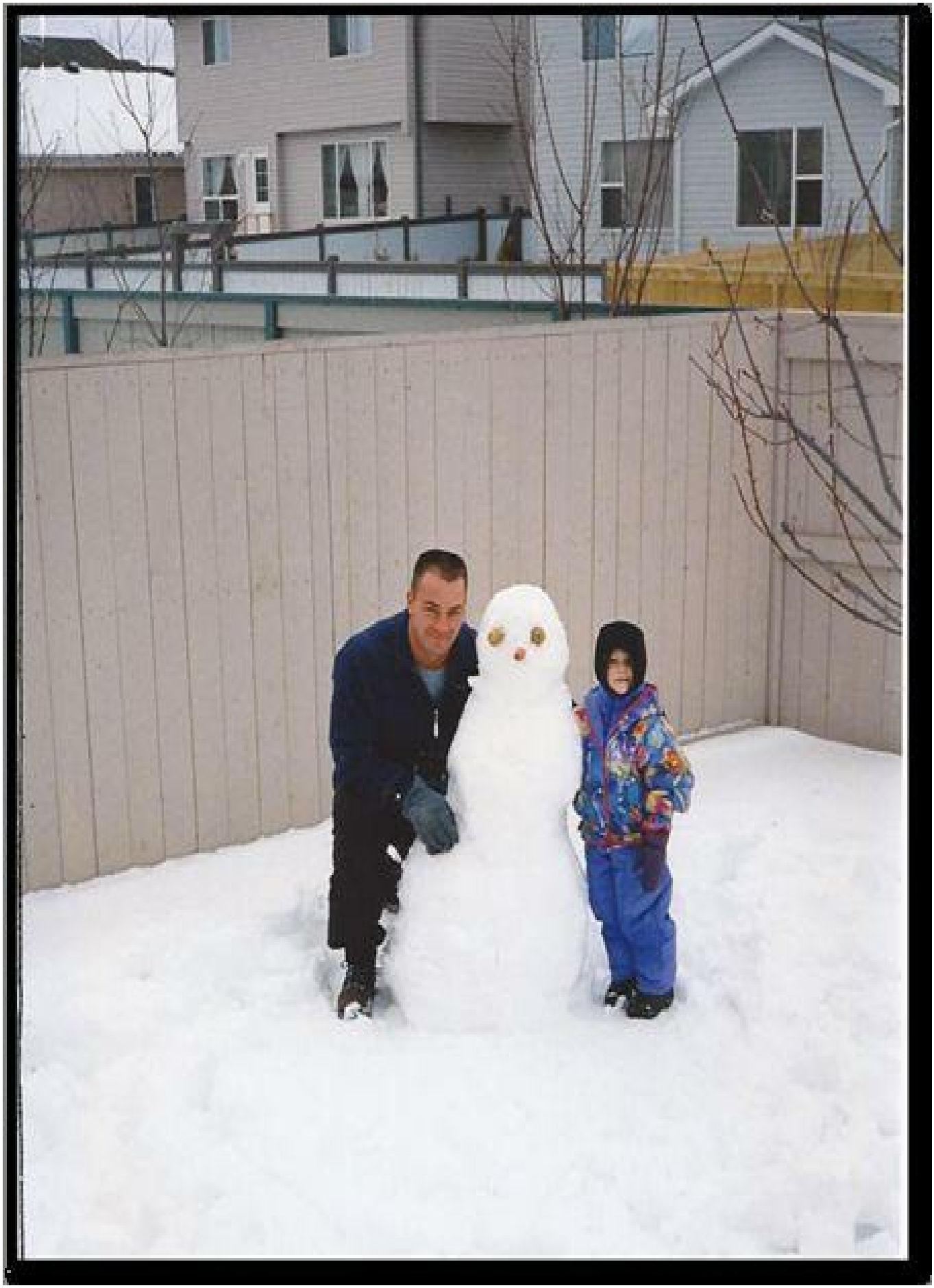
Don't get me wrong; I have still managed to spend time with my wife and kids. It's just that with the exhaustion which results from getting my list of chores completed each week, I'm left quite tired and drained. Even this unto itself isn't the horrific realization I mentioned earlier. I've always known I was tired and drained; the realization is that my being tired isn't coming across as such to my kids, my older daughter in particular. It's coming across as being grumpy and angry. I overheard my daughter telling my wife's friend that today was a pretty good day because daddy wasn't as grumpy as usual. I was horrified. I hadn't before realized that my mood has been so sour. After a long discussion with my wife I've come to realize that my being tired has translated into a rather unpleasant disposition. I've been short on patience and been smiling even less than normal (and less

than normal doesn't end up being a whole lot, now does it?). I felt like the worst dad on the planet, which I realize is an exaggeration, but I still felt horrible. With the problem now identified I am reevaluating my mental lists and my priorities. My job will still have to be at the top of the list, as I need to support my family and pay the bills, but after that my family and specifically "fun time" with my daughters has to be number 2. I'm not dumping my web site and bailing out on you guys, don't worry, you are just being moved down the priority list somewhat.

The Book Marks book club will be unaffected, as the work load involved is minimal and I think getting people to read is important but the comment board and even my commentaries are no longer on my "absolutely have to get done" list. Only my job and my family are on that list anymore. I'm still hoping not to miss a commentary

and I plan on updating the board each week, but I will no longer bring that work home with me. What doesn't get done on the road will not be getting done till the following week, when I'm back on the road. My kids only get their dad a couple days a week. They deserve to have me at my best, or at least as close to my best as I can give them. I hope you guys see where I come from on this and understand if, on occasion, I miss a commentary or go a few days without updating my comment board.

Till next week,
Lance Evers



Getting some much needed family time.

Quoting "Bill and Ted"

I'm not sure why I quote obscure movies or songs but it seems to be a trend and after that last quite serious commentary it's back to some more light hearted misadventure, once again with Janet and Alex Evanovich. The night of this encounter was the night of my 8th Wedding anniversary, and I'm very happy to report that on May 7th this year (2012) my wife and I will be celebrating our 18th.

BONJOUR INFO

Janet, Alex, and I at a completely different event in 2005

This was in Louisville, KY at a book signing

“Strange Things Were Afoot but not at the Circle K!”

May 12, 2002

Last Tuesday, May 7th, was my 8th wedding anniversary, and I had a very odd evening. For starters I spent most of the night with 2 women, neither of which was my wife. Now before you guys get your hopes up that I’m finally going to share some juicy torrid road story with you, I should add that it was with a mother and her daughter. Well I guess that still doesn’t completely rule out the torrid affair, in fact it would likely make it a much better story, but with me and this particular mother and daughter duo it does. My odd night was with Janet and Alex Evanovich. Janet is of

course the author of the Stephanie Plum series of books and Alex is her daughter. Most of you should remember Alex and Janet as I've mentioned them both here several times. Janet's book "One for the Money" was our Feb. Book Marks selection. Tuesday is when we tape SmackDown and on this particular Tuesday we were in Bridgeport, CT. Janet and Alex were in New York City doing some prep work for the release of "Hard Eight," the eighth installment in the aforementioned Stephanie Plum series. I will be doing the New York appearance with Janet June 20th; check out her website Evanovich.com for details. Bridgeport is only an hour or so from New York so the two of them, needing a break from the Big Apple as well as a cure for their own personal Storm withdrawal, made the drive up to catch the show.

Thankfully I had a good match and we managed to get together after the show. This

is where things started getting odd. None of us had a clue where we could go after the show to catch up and grab a bite to eat, so we were at a loss right from the get go. Janet and Alex eventually had to get back to New York and I was flying out of Newark, NJ so we decided since we both needed to head back I-95 south we would try to find something on the way. That's when I realized we would be driving right through Stamford, CT and I spotted Shane-O-Mac backstage. Shane must know Stamford so I asked him where we could go to eat. Shane gave us directions and we were off. Unfortunately we were in separate cars but the drive should only have been 15-20 minutes so it wouldn't be too bad. Thanks to construction, traffic on I-95 was atrocious and it took us just over an hour to reach our diner, which was closed. Janet was starving by this point, and spotted a McDonalds across the street that was still open (it was

12:45 am at this point). We figured this was our only hope so we headed to McDonalds. We ordered a little something and then they informed us that they closed at 1am and had already cleaned the floor so we aren't allowed to sit down. With no other options we ended up doing our catching up standing in the parking lot. You know you are with great people when you can stand in a McDonalds parking lot till 2 in the morning just talking. Alex and I have a lot in common, or at least similar interests, so I think we could talk for days if we weren't careful. Between books, wrestling, and our upcoming appearance the time flew by.

If it weren't for the police coming by to roust us out of the parking lot we may have been there all night. I kid you not. About a half hour after McDonalds shut their outside lights off a cruiser rolled up to see what we were doing. He likely thought we were high school kids and was afraid we were going to

vandalize or break into the place. I guarantee you he didn't expect to find a New York Times bestselling author and a pro wrestler discussing their book signing appearance. If he filed a report it may have said, "Strange things were afoot at the McDonalds." We were back on I-95 by 2:20am and driving back towards New York for one last odd occurrence. As we were driving I spotted this car with no lights on, which was swerving a bit. He wasn't going very fast so I figured he was drunk and I needed to get ahead of him as soon as possible. As I passed the guy I saw that he was swerving and driving slow not because he was drunk (or solely because he was drunk), but because the hood of the guy's car was up. I'm serious! (Like there is ever a doubt about that.) He was driving down I-95 with the hood popped up trying to see the road through the gap between the edge of the hood and the dash. I have no idea what

this guy was thinking but I was glad to get him behind me.

From there on in it was an uneventful drive. I got to the Newark airport 3 ½ hours before my flight. I parked in the Hertz return lot and typed this commentary while sitting in the front seat. The Hertz guy looked like he thought I was nuts. He was probably not that far off the mark. I think the check in counter should be open soon so I should go. Hopefully the next time I see Janet and Alex we won't have to stand in a parking lot.

Till next week,
Lance

P.S. I want to send a special thank you to the crew of people cheering for me in Halifax at the house show Sunday night (May 12). You guys made my night. I don't remember the last time I had so much fun.

STORM 1:08 lives!

The Third Man in the Ring

This next piece is a well timed one as I've just added a referees' training program to Storm Wrestling Academy, and the following commentary talks about what makes a good ref and how important they are in a good match. On a side note, the commentary also talks about a nasty bump taken by referee Tim White in a match. As it turns out it was a career ending injury and he is no longer a referee. He had surgery after said match but was reinjured in one of his first matches back and had to retire.

“What's in a Ref?”

May 30, 2002

In the second consecutive comment board inspired commentary, I am going to talk about what goes into being a good ref. A good ref can make a match, and a bad one can screw things up beyond belief. I’ve had the pleasure of working with some great refs and the misfortune of working with some pretty shitty ones, so I know from where I speak. Actually now that I think about it, I’ve even refereed a few matches so I’ve got the full perspective here. The first sign of a good ref is not noticing him. You don’t want to consciously be aware that he’s there, unless you need him. This in itself isn’t easy. The ring isn’t that big and at times there is a

lot going on in there. A ref needs to see spots develop and be aware of the tendencies of each guy in the match. Seeing what is happening before it happens enables a ref to stay out of the way and not disturb the flow of the match. In addition to being able to see what is going on, not seeing what is going on is equally important. A lot of times in matches things happen behind a ref's back (gee imagine that) and being able to let this happen while not looking like a complete buffoon is an art unto itself. Granted, the guys in the match can help the ref with this one but a good ref sometimes has to sacrifice himself to allow for a poorly set up "heat spot" to occur. That's another sign of a good ref, someone who can cover his own ass or is at least willing to take the bullet, so to speak, and look the idiot for the sake of a match.

Refs can be very handy messengers as well. In TV matches it's the ref who relays our time cues and any other messages that

need to be sent from the back. Being dependable and inconspicuous at this is another priceless talent. On house shows I will even use a ref to relay a spot to my opponent. Sometimes I'll feel a need to change the flow of a match quickly and not always have a means by which to call my spots directly to my opponent. In these occasions spots can be sent via the ref. I've had good experiences with Nick Patrick in this regard. He's always been right there when I needed him and he's very dependable as a relay. I've even had some refs, those who have a lot of experience, advise me on the tempo of a match. Mick McMichael, a Scottish ref I worked with in Europe, knew the local crowds better than the foreign boys and helped us all in the ring. Helpful hints like "give'm a spot kid," "sell it, let them see your face," and "fire up baby, fire up" can be so helpful when first starting out. I've even had refs call full-

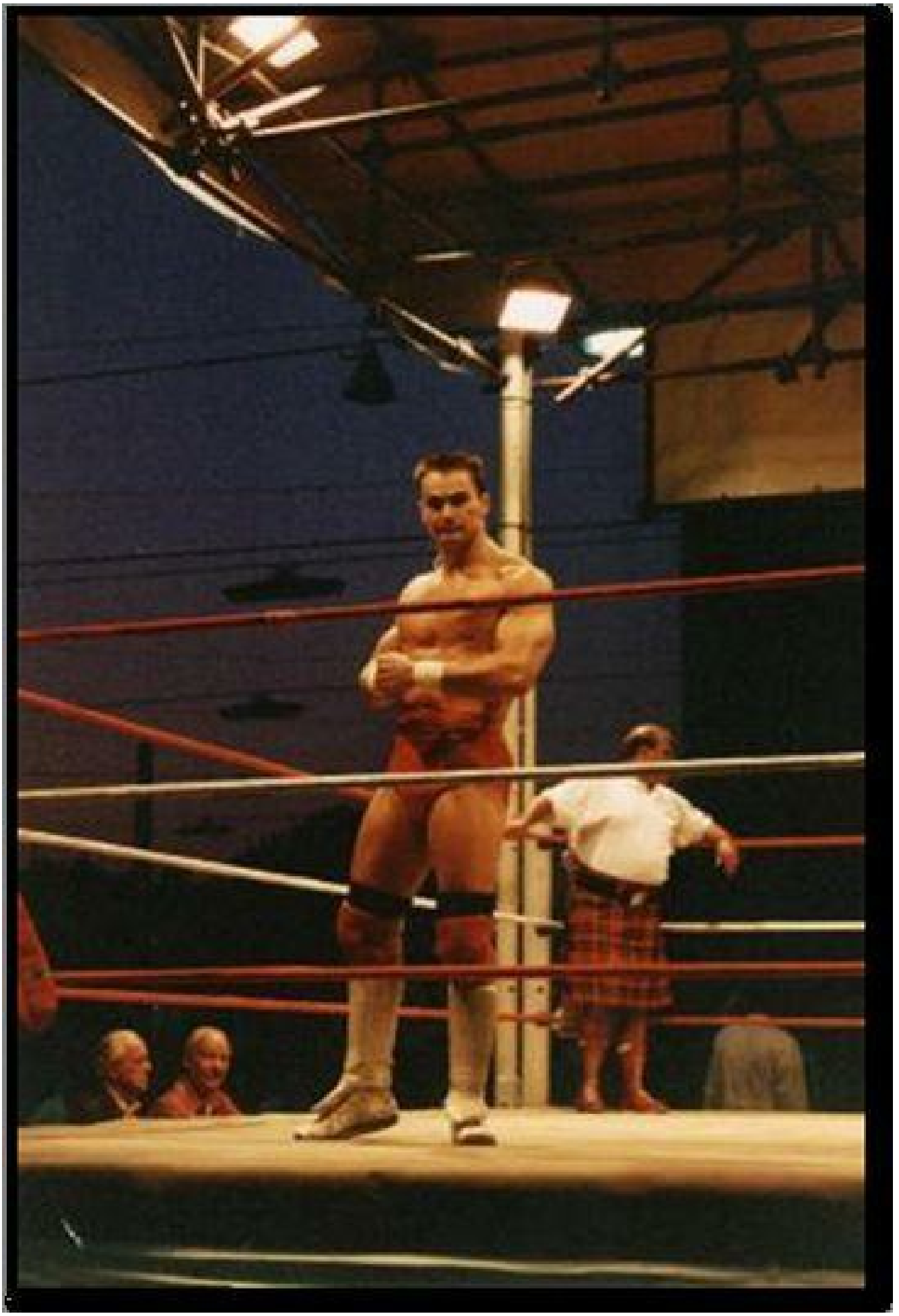
blown spots for me. Those days are behind me now because my experience level is such that few refs would feel comfortable stepping on my toes by trying to call a spot for me, but being able to contribute to a match in this way makes you a better ref.

If all of that isn't enough, sometimes a ref needs to get physically involved and a willingness and ability to do so is paramount. When it comes time to "bump" the ref you want to have someone who can take a good shot and sell it well. On our last PPV referee Tim White proved his value in this regard. He took a hellacious bump into the cage during the Hell in a Cell match. He bled and got the crap kicked out of him. It looked great and added to the intensity and believability of the match. On a side note, he even dislocated his shoulder on the bump and didn't complain a bit. He told Jericho to go ahead and run him into the cage the second time and his only concern after the

match was that everything looked okay. Tim White earned a lot of respect from me that night.

He likely earned it from everyone else a long time ago, but I've only been here a year and haven't worked with him that much. The match came first; he worried about himself later. That's not a good ref, that's a great one! Get well soon Timmy, you're an asset to this business and any match you ref. Those are just a few of the obvious uses and talents of a good ref. I could likely go on for another couple of pages but I won't. Good refs are priceless and fortunately we have quite a few of them in WWE. I know I will get a bunch of requests to list the guys I think are the best and to name the guys I prefer not to work with but you can save your breath (or at least your typing) as doing so would be unprofessional. You've now got enough information to make those conclusions yourself.

Till next week,
Lance Storm



Vienna Austria 1993
Referee Mick McMichael in the background

"Time to Relax"

June 5, 2002

This past week was the most relaxing week I've had in some time. To start things off my road trip was very close to home. Our Sat. and Sun. house shows were in Saskatchewan, which is just a 1-hour direct flight from home. I flew into Saskatoon, worked the show there and then did the drive down to Regina. Sunday I got to relax a bit at the gym and do the Sunday night show. Both shows were near sellouts and the crowds were very lively, and if that wasn't good enough I got to be the home Country babyface. Working as a face is always a fun change of pace, albeit a bit of a challenge. When you find your groove be it as a face or

heel it always takes your brain a while to switch over and work properly on the other side of the fence. After 2 great shows I got to fly back home. Wow that was nice, leave Sat. mid afternoon and home Mon. morning. I got to hit the gym, have lunch with my kids and head out for the short drive to Lethbridge for the Mon. house show. My mom was in town for the week visiting so she watched my kids so my wife could come to the show with me. We don't get a whole lot of time together just the 2 of us so even a 2-hour drive seems like a fun time out.

The highlight of the Mon. show was my wife's baking. She baked a bunch of cookies and desserts to bring to the show, so she was super over with the agents and the boys. You ever want to make a good impression with a bunch of wrestlers, bring food! I was on before intermission so I was back home in my own bed by 11:30pm. SmackDown in Calgary on Tues. was another easy day. The

Saddle Dome in Calgary is only 20 minutes from my house and as it turns out I didn't even have a match. Granted I would have loved to wrestle in the Dome, but my involvement in the Test-HHH match kept me on TV and I learned a long time ago to take a bump free night whenever you can. This business is hard enough on the body; never complain about giving your body a rest. After the show I actually went out. WHAT? I said I actually went out! My wife, my brother, and a bunch of friends were all sitting together during the show and they decided they were going out. A bunch of the boys were also going out so they all decided to head to "The Drink", a bar not too far from the Saddle Dome. I would usually ditch everyone and go home but since my wife was going and there was going to be a few friends there that I haven't seen in a while I decided, what the hell. The Drink was great, they ushered us in the back door and even

roped off a part of the bar, so we wouldn't get swamped by fans. I don't remember the last time I was in a bar and I can't believe how little the bar scene has changed since I worked as a doorman 8 years ago. Even with going out, I was home in my own bed by 2am. Any night you get to spend in your own bed is a very good thing.

If the extra 2 days at home that week wasn't good enough, I was left off the house shows this weekend so I got to stay home till Mon. night this week. 7 days in a row at home is like an extended vacation so I loved it. I had the chance to spend more time with my kids, get some stuff done around the house, and I even had the chance to catch a couple of movies. My movie experiences were a mixed bag. My wife and I went to see "The Sum of all Fears" which was pretty good. It's not a "run out and buy the DVD" movie but it was an enjoyable two hours. Our other movie experience was a rental and

it was not good at all. We rented Vanilla Sky and thought it was dreadful. If you haven't seen it yet, save yourself the time. It's a poor attempt at making a clever movie. You're better of re-renting Total Recall; it's a much cleverer movie. I spent the whole movie trying to make sense of what was going on, only to find out in the end that it wasn't supposed to be making any sense. Gee that's a brilliant twist. Any time you do a less clever movie than Arnold, you know you're in trouble. My advice to Mr. Cruise, "Mission Impossible 3." Well that's all for me this week. I'm back to work and will hopefully have something really interesting and exciting for you next week. If not I'll just babble for a couple pages like I did this week (LOL).

Till next week,
Lance

Aloha

Hawaii has become my favourite vacation spot. My wife and I have made several trips to the Aloha State on vacation, and hope to make several more. My first trip to the Islands was for WWE and while it was a great trip, it was far from a vacation. Next is my account from my first visit to Hawaii.

“Hawaii Five-O”

June 19, 2002

Okay I have no idea what the Five-O stands for but I was in Hawaii this past Saturday, and it made a decent name for a TV series so why not a commentary? I wasn’t in Hawaii on vacation; we had a house show there. Wow, a paid vacation in Hawaii. Well not exactly, I was there less than 9 hours. 4 of those hours were spent at the airport, 3 at the building, and the remaining 2 were spent driving to and from the aforementioned spots or at TGI Fridays. It certainly was a long way to go for lunch and a match, but you play the cards that are dealt you. Lunch was really nice at least. We sat out on the patio at TGI Fridays and

enjoyed the beautiful weather. Service was slow as hell, but it's not like we were in a huge rush. The show itself was fantastic. WWE hadn't been to Hawaii since 1994 so the show sold out in about an hour and the crowd was rowdy and full of energy. It wasn't your typical wrestling crowd. I think there were more casual fans in attendance than usual. With WWE being such a rare occurrence there were likely a number of people who had never been to a live wrestling show before. With a less educated crowd (non-hardcore, loyal TV watching) they didn't react much to holds and actual wrestling but popped for every bump. This made for a fast paced show, as there was no need for us to try to slow a match down and tell a story. At times like these it's best to just give the crowd what they want, a fast paced TV like match. We delivered and they responded. I wrestled Billy Kidman on the show and had one of our better matches.

Kidman is always a pleasure to work with and with his tan of late, he could almost pass for a local.

In addition to a great show there were two people of note in attendance. Genichiro Tenryu, my old boss from WAR in Japan, was there and it was great to see him again. Tenryu is likely the best boss I ever worked for. He gave me steady work for over 2 years when I really needed it, and always made sure I was taken care of. He was even the first person to congratulate me on the birth of my first daughter. I was in Japan when she was born and every morning when I boarded the team bus Tenryu would ask me, "Baby come yet?" The morning she was born and I said yes, he was the first to shake my hand and congratulate me (he also palmed me $1000 when he did it). Every tour after that he would always ask how she was. Tenryu is definitely one of the "good guys." He seemed genuinely pleased that both

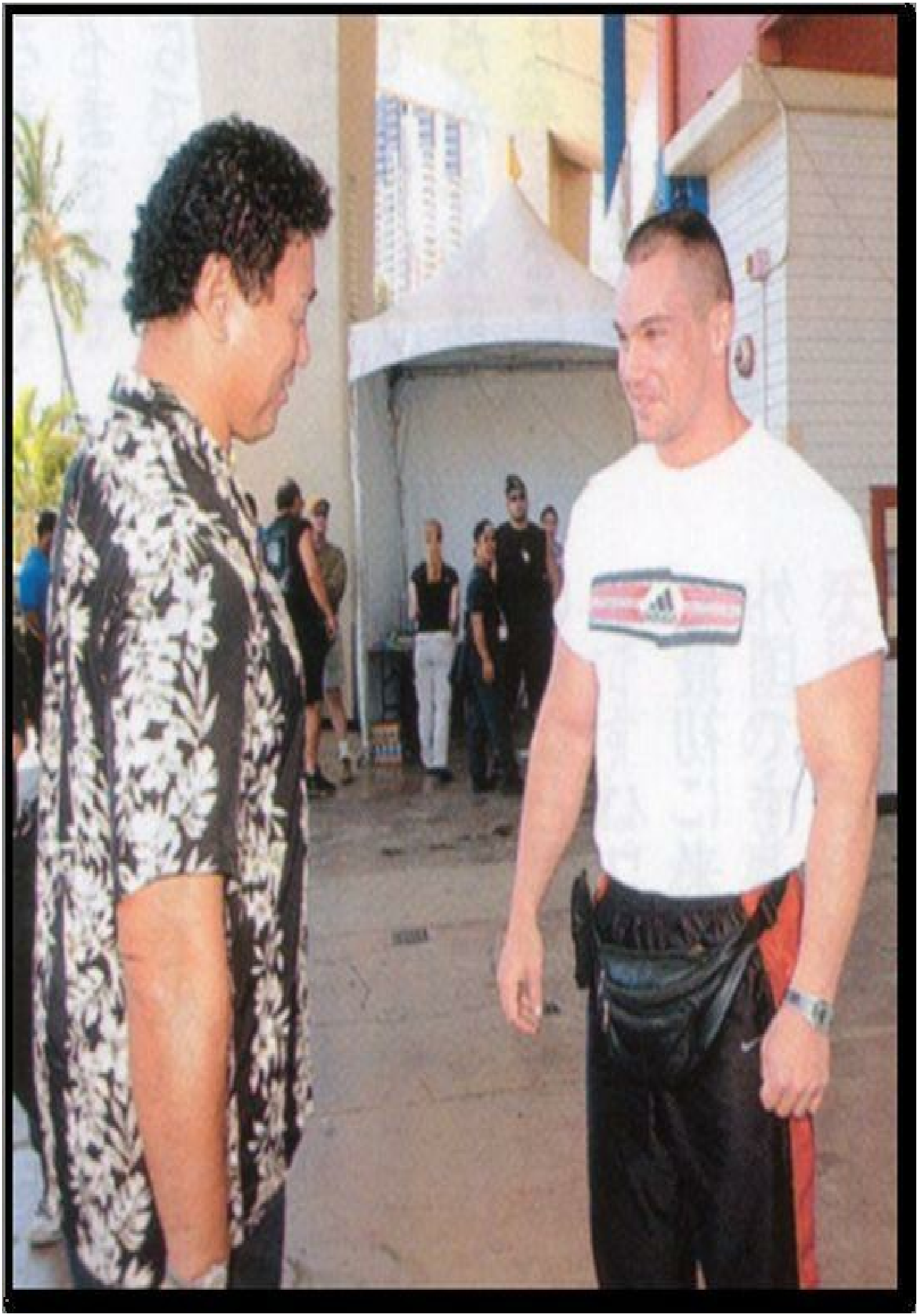
Jericho and I (we both worked for him in WAR) have done so well. I think on some level he will always think of us as "his boys."

The other person of note was Bruce Willis. Seriously! I guess he knows Rock and came by to see him and catch the show. Bruce seemed like a real down to earth guy. He made a point to come backstage several times during the show and talk to the guys and put over their matches. I don't think he had ever been to a show before, but he looked like he was having a really good time. He sat front row, ringside and even did a small spot with Rock and Jericho during their match. It was great meeting him, but I was amazed at how small he was. Being around "the boys" all the time you sometimes forget how big we all are. I consider myself a below average size guy by "wrestling" standards and forget that by regular people standards I'm pretty big. I guess I need to get out more and actually

spend some time with regular people to get some of my perspective back.

All in all it was a great time. The travel was brutal, but that's nothing new. Hopefully the next time I go to Hawaii I'll be able to spend a bit of time there.

Till next week, Aloha!
Lance



With Genichiro Tenryu in Hawaii
I was so happy to see my old boss, so much respect

Performing Off Broadway

I've had a lot of unique experiences over my career and the one you are about to read about was one of the oddest, and most enjoyable. This is another Janet and Alex Evanovich adventure, and in this particular adventure I join Janet at her big book launch in New York City and actually perform on stage at a theatre just off Broadway.

My wife Tina and I back stage at the Plumtacular event at an Off Broadway Theatre

“Plum Crazy: In New York”

June 27, 2002

Up until this past week I would have said that I hate New York, even at the best of times. That statement is no longer true, because I was in New York last week and had the time of my life. I guess the difference is that I was not there on business. I was also there with my wife and a couple friends instead of the boys, which never hurts. Nothing against the boys but hey, if I can pick between them and my wife, the boys are doing the job more often than Sho Funaki. (No offense Sho!) So if I wasn’t in New York for business, what exactly was I doing there? For those of you who bother to read my News Section posts you already

know. For those of you who don't, SHAME ON YOU! I was in New York to do an appearance at Janet Evanovich's book signing. Janet is the author of "One for the Money" (Feb. Book Marks), the first in a series of Stephanie Plum novels. The latest installment "Hard Eight" was released Wednesday (June 19th) and Thursday night was the kick off of Janet's book tour to promote the novel.

Janet invited me to take part in her "Plumtacular Event" (her word not mine) a few months ago and I jumped at the chance. Janet and Alex (her daughter) are a lot of fun and with the cooperation of my mother in-law (to babysit my kids) my wife was able to join us in New York. It would be a mini vacation as well as a way to promote reading and take part in a new avenue of my book club. I had to fly straight to New York from TV in Sacramento so I didn't get to go home last week. I was lucky enough to coordinate

my flight with my wife's and we landed in New York within 10 minutes of each other. We landed early evening, so we only had time for a nice dinner Wednesday night, but had some time Thursday to see New York. My wife had never been to New York before so she was anxious to experience the city, and more importantly, do some shopping. We hit the busy streets of New York as soon as stores were open (10 am) and just wandered store-to-store seeing the city. My store highlight was Toys R Us in Times Square, which was huge. I managed to find my action figure in a store for the first time. I bought two of them and it was rather funny at the checkout. As the girl was ringing my figures in she kept glancing back and forth between the action figure and me. She wanted to ask but was afraid to. Finally I smiled and nodded my head and she started freaking out. She was almost hyperventilating trying to find a pen and get

an autograph. Oh the joys of being famous! (LOL).

We shopped till 3pm and then it was back to the hotel to meet up for our rehearsal. The rehearsal was a complete disaster. All we had to do was walk through the readings we were going to do in order and we couldn't even get that right. It was really pathetic to be honest, disorganization at its finest. I'm not sure why a small group of adults can't figure out how to walk on and off stage on cue, but we were having real trouble with it. The only part of rehearsal that went well was the impromptu casting of "a scummy guy." We needed said "scummy guy" for one reading and, for some inadequately explained reason, were a man short. One of the band members offered to fill the role and was incredible at it. Alex and I joked that "scummy guy" came a little too natural to our band leader and he likely had some firsthand experience for the role!

When the rehearsal was finished we were prepared for the worst. It was going to take more than an appropriately cast "scummy guy" to save this one! The doors opened at 6:30 and about 800-1000 people showed up. We were in Town Hall Theater in Manhattan, which is basically just an old theater house. The people were in their seats and we, the performers if you will, were huddled side stage waiting for our cues, or a complete disaster, whichever came first. From there things went off without a hitch, seriously! I have no idea what happened between rehearsal and performance, but things went smooth as silk. The band played all of our entrances, we hit our cues, and the crowd loved the readings.

I did two separate readings, the first as Ranger, and the second as Diesel. The Stephanie Plum series is written in the first person, so Janet read all of Stephanie's dialog and narration and the rest of us only

had to read our character's dialog. It was very much like acting out a part in a movie, which made for a lot of fun. Ranger is a recurring character in the Plum series. He is Stephanie Plum's Bounty Hunter mentor, who can best be described as a sinister superhero. He's a great character but unfortunately not one with a lot of dialog, especially in this reading, so I didn't really have much to sink my teeth into with Ranger. Diesel on the other hand was a great role. Diesel is a new character who will debut in Janet's Christmas novella (Visions of Sugar Plums) due out in November. He's a smart-ass, high on himself, somewhat disgruntled spirit of Christmas, and I had a ball with his character. The crowd, predominately women, loved it and Janet and I interacted well together. She even managed to talk me into taking my shirt off half way through the scene (I'm not sure how she managed that one). After the

readings, Janet signed copies of her book and I signed autographs and took pictures with anyone who was interested. There were a few wrestling fans in attendance and a bunch of very excited women so I was kept pretty busy with photographs and signatures. Everyone had a great time and I can't thank Janet and Alex enough for letting me be a part of the "Plumtacular Event." If you ever get a chance to attend an Evanovich book signing, you have to go. They are a lot of fun and you won't find better people anywhere. Her books are pure lighthearted fun and I can't recommend them enough.

Till next week,
Lance/Ranger/Diesel.

The Joys of Air Travel, or not

There is certainly no shortage of anti-airline rants in this book. I hope you aren't getting too tired of reading them, but the fact of the matter is if you want the feel of what life as a pro-wrestler is like, you have to deal with what we deal with and most of our stress on the road is due to having to fly several days per week. If there was one saving grace to the old territory days it was no doubt the ability to drive to all the towns and not having to deal with the airline industry. It's interesting to note that while I seldom travel by air anymore, I still on occasion have to deal with the troubles I'm about to rant about in this next commentary, about frequent flier miles, and still avoid traveling with Air Canada as much as

possible.

“Kurt Angle doesn't Suck, Air Canada does!”

July 17, 2002

Sorry I had to skip a week on you guys, but last week’s road schedule was brutal. I didn’t have time to turn my computer on once. I debated spending some time at home to get something out but thought better of it and had a very domestic 3 days at home. I took my kids to the park as well as the Calgary Stampede. I even cut my own grass the first time this year and cleaned my garage (oh the life of a “superstar”). Strangely enough I enjoyed the domestic chores almost as much as I did the playtime with my kids. Just being home and doing regular stuff, when you seldom get to

do it, can be oddly rewarding. Enough about life at home; it's time to get on with my latest tirade on Air Canada. As all of you should know by now I have no love lost for the airline industry. I go off on it all the time. Air Canada however has taken poor customer service to an all time low. My current complaint covers two issues: frequent flyer miles and customer service in regards to handling customer complaints. I have tried several times this year to book frequent flier tickets for my family. I have miles out the WAZOO and have no interest in flying in my spare time so I book them for my family. In the past I could pretty much pick the date and time of day of my travel. Lately however Air Canada never has availability. Now I realize that flights get booked up, but the thing is my family always has flexible travel plans. My wife and kids don't work and my mom is retired.

My last attempt put me over the edge. I

tried to book flights from Calgary to Toronto and was constantly being told there was nothing available. For my own amusement I had the agent keep checking availability even past my desired date of travel (I already knew I was screwed for travel but I was curious how long the lady would keep saying those familiar words, "Nothing Available"). I was looking for 4 seats and it took her 38 days to find 1 available seat. I was booking 2 months in advance as well. 38 days from my preferred date of travel to just find one seat. It was at this point that I got fed up and snapped. Air Canada has 5 flights a day from Calgary to Toronto and using the claim of 20% of seats being held for frequent flyer tickets, totals between 100-200 seats per day (depending on aircraft size). Maybe it's just me but I find it difficult to believe that they have 5000 frequent flyer seats booked in that time frame. From here I asked to speak to someone I could lodge a complaint with. I

was ready to accuse Air Canada of fraud. Their constant offer to earn miles and free travel are bogus, in my opinion, if they never let you book tickets. I was told that there is no one with Air Canada that I could speak to. All complaints have to be mailed or faxed to their office. This, while logical, was very frustrating. I say logical because if I treated my customers as poorly I would make it as difficult as possible for them to reach me too. I typed up a polite yet rather blunt letter and faxed it off to their no doubt busy complaints department.

This is where my problem with their customer service really starts. It's bad enough you can't talk to anyone and have to fax or mail your problems in, but you won't believe the response I finally got. I received a form letter from Air Canada this week. It stated something to the effect that they appreciated my taking the time to contact them and that they are sorry that my last

travel experience did not live up to expectations. They went on to say that they are working toward improvements and they are crediting my Aeroplan (frequent flyer) account 2500 miles as compensation. HOW DUMB IS THIS? It's obvious that they don't even read the complaints that they get. If they did they wouldn't offer a guy complaining that their Aeroplan miles are worthless and fraudulent more miles! I didn't have a last travel experience because they won't let me book tickets! They might as well offer to credit my account 1,000,000 miles for all the good they will do me. I'm not sure what I'm going to do from here. They only let you send in complaints and it's now obvious they don't bother reading them. Maybe I can get someone from a local Calgary news department to pick this up as a story. Maybe Air Canada will respond if they get enough bad press. If anyone has contacts with someone interested in

following this up let me know.

Do me a favour if you ever have intentions of booking with Air Canada: look into all other options before giving them your business. They are the most ignorant company I've ever had the displeasure of dealing with. Ironically enough I'm on an Air Canada flight while I type this; the joy of not booking your own travel.

Till next week,
Lance Storm

P.S. Any chance of you guys getting an "Air Canada Sucks!" banner at RAW or SmackDown in the future? That would make my day.

The Hulkster

It's almost comical that in this next piece I talk about what could be Hulk Hogan's last run in the ring. I made this same mistake 2 years earlier in a commentary that appeared in Storm Warning Vol. 1, where I talked about several guys who I thought were winding their respective careers down in 2000. In that instance I was off by more than a decade and here I am again in 2002 talking about what I thought was the Hulkster's last run in the ring. Now almost 10 years later in 2012, I'm still not sure his last match has even happened yet. I guess most people in wrestling live by the motto, "Never say Never, I may Wrestle for Ever."

"Hulkamania"

July 22, 2002

When people first find out that I am a pro-wrestler I get asked one of three questions. I can now answer them all affirmatively. The first question is, of course,"Is wrestling fake?" While I dislike the use of that word an affirmative answer is more accurate than a negative one in describing the nature of this business. Another of these questions is, "Do you know the Rock?" While Rock and I don't actually hang out and party together, I've certainly talked with him enough to claim accurately enough that I know the man. The last of the 3 questions is, "Have I ever wrestled Hulk Hogan?" I'm not sure why they want to

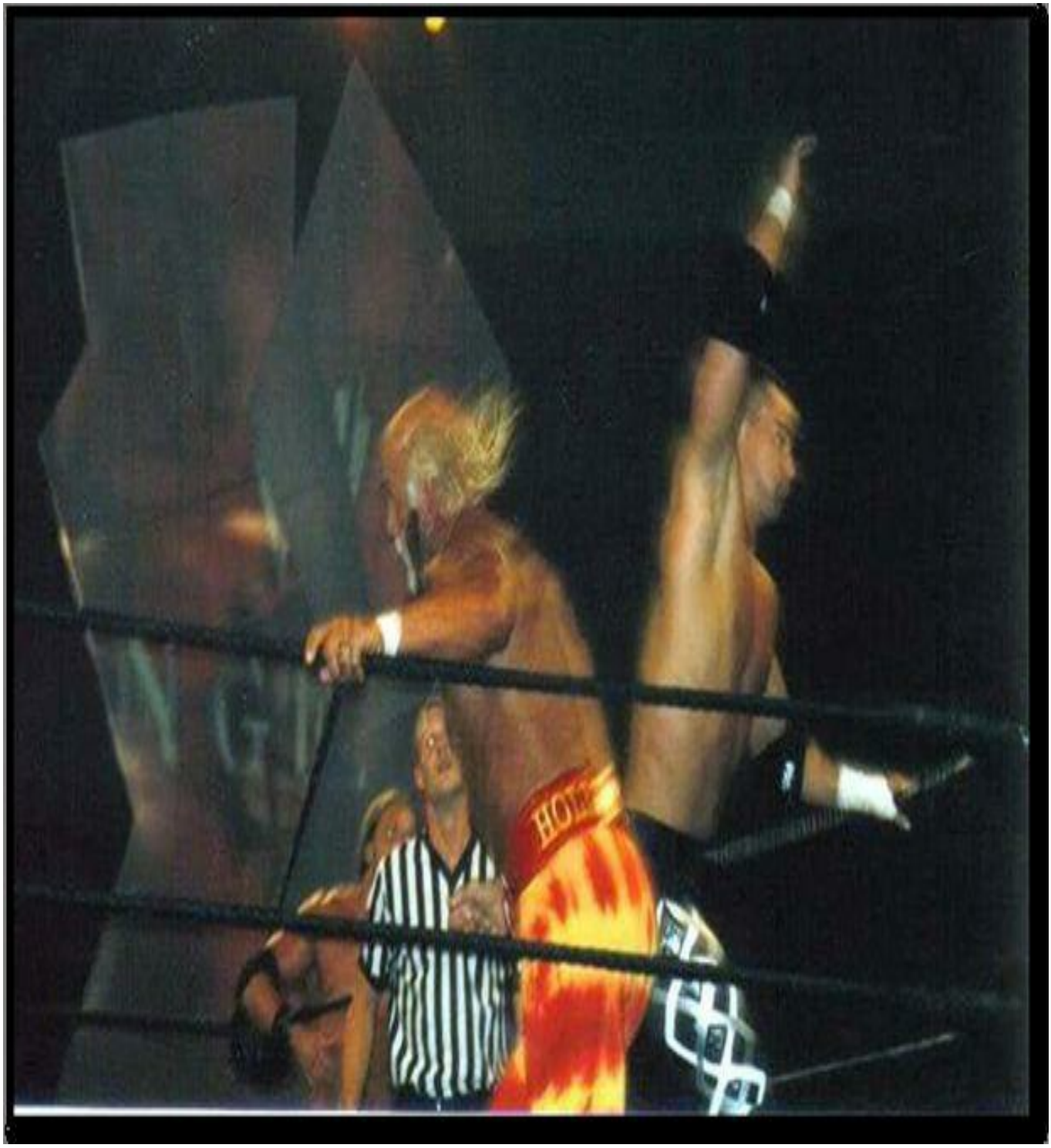
know if I “know” Rocky and if I’ve “wrestled” Hogan but at least now I can say yes to both. Oddly enough I was never a Hulkamanic as a kid. No offense to the Hulkster, I was just never a fan of his. I always liked the more athletic types like Randy Savage, The British Bulldogs, or Bret Hart. It also bothered me that as a babyface he raked eyes, and relied so heavily on punching. Perhaps I like my wrestling far too Black and White. With that said it was still pretty cool getting to wrestle him (I’m typing this Sat. before the PPV so I’m only commenting on our 6-man SmackDown match). I never thought I’d get to wrestle Hogan; I always figured that by the time I’d moved up the ladder far enough to be in the ring with him, he’d be out of the picture. I always figured he’d be working main events or nothing so I didn’t think our paths would ever cross in ring. Fortunately for me Hogan is working with more guys and doing

business in what is likely his last run as a wrestler. If not for this fact I would never have experienced Hulkamania.

Despite not being a Hulkamaniac as a fan, I was in complete awe of the experience as a worker. Hogan has this "thing", whatever it is that makes fans go crazy. He has a presence, a charisma that is off the charts and unequaled in our sport. Being in the ring with him was like nothing I'd ever experienced before; we could literally do no wrong. The crowd was so into him and thus so into our match that it was electric. You seldom, if ever, get that kind of heat in tag matches anymore. It was the kind of heat where you can feel a crowd aching for that tag, and then there's an explosion when it's made. It was a complete joy for everyone involved. It's funny too, that as hokey as I've always thought his Hulking up comeback was, I was really glad to be the one who got to feed it for him. It was likely a once in a

lifetime chance (maybe twice, depending on Sunday at the PPV) that really has no equal. I even got email from friends of mine from High School who were shocked and amazed to see me in the ring with the Hulkster. I think it was the shot that drove the nail home for them that I had in fact made it. In my High School yearbook my graduating year, they listed my "probable destination" as "WWF Heavyweight Champ." I don't think the yearbook staff ever thought their prediction would be this accurate. I'm not the Champ and they've gotten the "F" out since then, but I'm a lot closer than they probably ever thought possible.

Thanks Hulk,
Lance Storm
P.S. You take a hell of a Superkick!



Working with Hulk Hogan was so much fun

Traded to RAW

I've got a good story to add to this next commentary but I think it is better told after you read it than before, so go ahead and read it now and I'll meet you on the other side.

"RAW"

July 31, 2002

I don't have a whole lot of time this week so this may be a short one. As everyone should know by now I jumped to RAW from SmackDown. Actually Test, Christian, Jericho, and I all did this week. It was a mass importation of Canadian talent, so to speak. I won't get into all of the reasons why we were moved over. To be truthful I'm not even entirely sure why. Someone might have mentioned that as general manager Eric might be allowed to write cheques (LOL) but who knows for sure! Either way RAW is my new home. This should make a lot of you very happy. When we did the "draft" I received a ton of mail

complaining about not getting UPN and not being able to see me work anymore. This should now be a thing of the past. My mom was in the same boat as the rest of you and she is thrilled with my new spot on RAW. She gets direct TV and up till now had to rely solely on this website to keep track of my career. Moving to RAW does open a few new doors that should please the Internet crowd. I can wrestle RVD again which most of you seemed to enjoy last time round, and it also opens the door for the first ever "Battle of Alberta" match between Chris Benoit and I. Granted he's a Canadian heel and more apt to join us than feud with us at present, but at least it's possible. One can always hope!

Another person I've always wanted to work with is on RAW and this coming Sunday the match will happen. For those of you who can make it to Pittsburgh for the Sunday RAW house show you will have the

chance to see me wrestle the "Nature Boy." The main event on that show will be Christian and I vs. Ric Flair and The Undertaker. That is going to be so much fun for me. I thought I had the day off but when I found out I'd be wrestling these two guys I was glad I had to work. We throw the title Superstar around a little too often in our business, but these two guys are legitimately that! Taker and Flair, it doesn't get much bigger than that. Maybe Hogan and Rock, but hey that was last week. What can I say, it's been a good month!

A couple last quick notes. We are all still making the Australia tour, so everyone Down Under can relax, we are still coming. Also "HAPPENSTANCE," FOZZY'S latest CD is ON SALE NOW. Go buy one, JERKY!

Till next week guys, I've got to run.
Lance

Traded to RAW continued

All righty then, glad you're back, and as Paul Harvey used to say, and now for the rest of the story. I left out a lot of details as to why we got switched from SmackDown to RAW, because I was always careful not to post things that might get me in trouble. Well 10 years later I'm no longer working for the company and this far after the fact it's not like it matters all that much anymore. I remember getting called into the office the afternoon before our last SmackDown show and being told we were getting moved to RAW. It was Jericho, Christian, Test, and I. Christian, Test, and I were together as the group The Un-Americans and Jericho while not an official member of the group did have an association with us. At one point we were

going to be pushed as a foursome and I even pitched the name C4 for our group, but that never happened and really has no part in this story.

We were told we were being moved to RAW in hopes of having a positive effect on the morale on that show. Since the brand split RAW had been a far more tense and unpleasant locker room environment compared to the friendly family atmosphere that had developed on SmackDown. We were told that the hope was that moving us to RAW as well as moving a couple people from RAW to SmackDown would better balance the atmosphere of both locker rooms. We were also told the move would be immediate and this was our last SD show. That night there was a Cage match in the Main Event, I think between Edge and Kurt Angle. There was a mass run-in angle at the end of the show, that was no doubt booked before the decision was made to move us all

to RAW. The free for all at the end involved the recently debuted "Ruthless Aggression" John Cena (in tights and wrestling boots) and Rey Mysterio, who dove off the top of the cage onto Christian, Jericho, Test and I. It was a super hot angle that opened up a ton of great match opportunities for us all on SmackDown. The angle was super hot and we were all super pissed that it was just being dropped cold and we were being moved to RAW to start over cold.

Another little note that I doubt anyone but me noticed is that when we got moved over to RAW the following week the RAW opening video package was redone to accommodate the new arrivals and remove the departing superstars. Jericho, Christian, and Test were added to the video yet I was not. I don't know if this was an intentional or accidental snub but I thought it was pretty ignorant and disrespectful and the fact that I remember it today means it

probably still bugs me a bit.

Down Under

While I hate the 16 hour flight needed to get to Australia it is one of my favourite places to work and I'd love to vacation there someday. This next commentary is a recap of the WWE tour to Australia for the "Global Warning" Tour and the event at Colonial Stadium. This was an amazing show and a great trip. I've included a few personal photos from the trip which I hope you enjoy.

"Global Warning: A Look Back"

August 11, 2002

While I type this I am sitting on my flight home from Australia. I figured this would be an appropriate time to give you my thoughts of my trip Down Under. Apart from the flight, I had a great time. Travel is always the worst part of this job and this past week was no exception. We headed to Australia right after TV Monday. We had a charter flight from Baltimore to LA, spent most of Tuesday in LA then flew from there to Melbourne. The charter flight was 5 ½ hours and the Melbourne flight an additional 16. Needless to say I was tired and worn out upon my arrival in Australia.

We did have a couple days off before we

had to work, but not a lot of that was free time. In addition to the show they also ran "Fan Frenzy," which was similar to the WrestleMania "Fan Access," so we had several appearances to do. These were really well organized and all of the boys were amazed at how polite the Australian fans were. All of the Aussie fans were great. You couldn't leave the hotel without getting bombarded by large groups of fans, which is usually a nightmare, but with the politeness these fans displayed it was next to impossible to turn any of them down and they were so nice you didn't want to. I don't remember the last time I signed so many autographs.

I was lucky enough to do an extra excursion this trip as well. They had several outings, which were filmed for Confidential and will also be used for extras on the Global Warning DVD. Christian, Kurt Angle, and I did one of these and the highlight was a trip

to the Zoo. Okay, granted a trip to the Zoo isn't usually a big highlight but we were taken on a special tour and they took us right inside the animal enclosures. We got to feed and pet the animals. We got to feed Giraffes, Kangaroos, Tree Kangaroos, and Koalas. Fortunately I took my digital camera with me so I got some great shots. The Tree Kangaroos and the Koalas were our favourites as we got to handle both of them. The Koalas were unbelievably cute and soft. Kurt wanted to adopt one; he just couldn't get enough of them. I preferred Timmy the Tree Kangaroo because we got closest to him; he was by far the most hands on of all the animals.

If all of the extras weren't enough the actual event was awesome. We wrestled in Colonial Stadium, which is huge. We set a new venue attendance record of 56,734, the second largest crowd I've worked behind WrestleMania in Toronto. What made it

even better was it had an extremely low ceiling for such a large venue. I originally thought it was an outdoors show but the stadium just had a retractable roof (similar to Sky Dome just flat instead of domed). This lower ceiling seemed to keep the noise in better and made the crowd seem much louder. The crowd was both huge and hot, which made working so much fun.

Christian and I worked Rey Mysterio and Billy Kidman. Our match went quite well, not perfect, but good enough for everyone I've talked to to say they enjoyed it. There were a lot of matches on the show so we didn't have as much time as I would have liked, but a solid performance nonetheless. Rey was definitely the highlight, hitting several spectacular, highflying moves. Kidman even managed to get in the Shooting Star Press, so as not be outdone. Unfortunately I didn't get the chance to hit my drop kick; we stopped Rey

for the bulk of our offense and I just didn't see the point in hitting my drop kick on someone who is 5' 4". Drop kick aside, I hope everyone in the arena had a great time because I know all of us sure did. This was a great show and definitely an event worth picking up on DVD when it comes out. I'd like to thank all of the great Aussie fans for making it so much fun for us. Your enthusiasm and your manners made it a truly spectacular event. I hope when WWE makes its way back to Australia it will be a RAW trip, and I can once again go Down Under.

Till next week mate, Cheers,
Lance

Feeding the tree Kangaroo

Kurt Angle riding a bike at the

Melbourne Zoo

I'm not sure what the lady from Harry Potter is doing there

“Good Times, For a Change”

August 27, 2002

Sorry I’ve been away a bit, of late. I’ve been both a little tired and suffering from writer’s block. Actually I’m not sure it’s so much writer’s block as it is that there just hasn’t been all that much to talk about. I’ve had a few horrific travel experiences but I couldn’t bring myself to go on yet another airline tirade (believe me though I wanted to). This past weekend something very unique happened so I am once again inspired to write. The unique experience of which I speak is actually the completely uncommon, good fortune with travel. As strange as it is to hear me say it, or at least see me type it, it is true. I had a stretch of

good fortune with travel this week. It wasn't a long stretch but I'll take a break whenever I can get it. What makes this good fortune even more unbelievable is that it took place in, of all places, New York City. There was even a bit of good luck in Ohio but that is more a Christian story and I'll add that at the end if I have room. We were in New York for both Summer Slam and Raw this week. Christian and I actually stayed in Newark, NJ the whole time but I pretty much consider the whole area New York, and as a general rule of thumb I despise this area of the country. To me it represents TRAFFIC, or more accurately TRAFFIC JAMS, and I hate traffic. Granted so does everyone else, but when you travel as much as I do you also have a very short fuse.

When Christian and I travel we try to plan out our next day's events before we go to bed: decide what time we have to get up to get everything done and still get to the

show on time. We never seem to have enough time to sleep so we try to plan it as tight as possible. Saturday night we planned out our Sunday schedule. Leave hotel by this time, finish at diner by this time, drive to Long Island (this is the real crap shoot, because traffic on the Belt Parkway can double or triple your travel time), arrive at gym around here, train for this long, back to building by X o'clock. This is our usual plan and it almost never works out to schedule. That's the nice thing about finding a gym right near the building; you can lengthen or shorten your work out as need be to still make the show on time. We are given a little bit of leeway on our arrival time but TV and PPVs it's a good idea to be there as close to on-time as humanly possible. On Summer Slam Sunday we started off right on schedule. I was in the car 1 minute early and Christian was there 45 seconds after I was. We ate at the Skyline Diner (a great place to

eat) and were paying our bill right at the end of our 30 minutes of allotted time. Now the tricky part, the drive into Long Island. I have never in my life done this without hitting traffic. It's never a question of if; it's a question of when. We usually don't add too much time to account for traffic because we don't like passing up those few extra minutes for sleep. We usually make those minutes up with a rushed work out. This trip we didn't hit a single traffic delay. I couldn't believe it. Good thing too, because even with our unprecedented stop free trip we arrived at the gym right on schedule. This was a new gym for me, but Christian had been there before. We got our full workout in and didn't have to rush or skip a set. Very seldom on the road do we find both a good gym and the time to hit a full workout. This day was going great. We left the gym right on time and hit the arena 15 minutes ahead of schedule. Being early to the arena is never

a bad thing and on a PPV day it can be a blessing. At this point I figured we were in big trouble. Things never go this well for us on the road and New York City is never kind. It was about this point that I mentioned to Christian that I was worried about our match. I said, "Things are going far too well for us today. Something very bad is going to happen and it will likely be in our match."

Well as most of you hopefully saw, nothing bad happened in our match. As a matter of fact I was extremely happy with it. We had a ton of heat and the crowd was totally into it at the end. Whenever you have the crowd count out loud with the near falls or the finish, you've done your job well. When Booker covered Christian after the side kick the crowded counted as loudly as I've ever heard them. I think I should mention that the crowd was hot the entire show and we (WWE) delivered the best PPV

in a real long time. This was a top-notch show from top to bottom. After the show our luck continued. We left the arena and made it back to the diner in Newark in record time, not one traffic hold up. We ate, hit the hotel, and were amazed at our day of good fortune. A good match, a great show, hot crowd, and no traffic jams in New York. I guess miracles can happen.

Till next week,
Lance

Ok I didn't forget about Christian's bit of good luck. Friday night in Ohio, Christian and I didn't travel together. My flight was extremely late (go figure) so he went to the show by himself. We never take the insurance packages with rental cars when we rent. With the amount we rent, it would really add up. Most of us have Gold credit cards of some type which will cover us if

need be. It's likely a hassle but it's nothing we've ever had to use (touch wood). It was pouring rain after the show Friday night. Christian was backing his car out to follow me back to Cleveland. With the pouring rain he didn't see a cement wall behind him and backed right into it. When he checked for damage he found that he'd cracked the plastic bumper quite badly. Part of it was hanging off and another part had a huge crack in it. Christian is a huge scammer and he was trying to think of a way out of this one without having to pay or try to file an insurance claim through his credit card. We never came up with a plan so he just returned the car and hoped they didn't notice it until he was gone so he could deal with it later. He returned the cars and when they gave him the receipt they charged him $64 instead of the $26 he booked it for. He went off on them for this. Let's not mention that he crashed their car, how dare they

overcharge him? He went into the counter and started to complain. When the lady looked up his contract, she apologized and said, “I’m sorry sir, I had you down for full coverage (insurance), I can take that off if you'd like.” Christian realizing that he just found his way out of his accident, replied, “No that’s okay, I can write it off anyway, just leave it on,” and walked away.

It’s not 4:20 by my watch

This next commentary has absolutely nothing to do with wrestling and many within the industry will no doubt disagree with what I say in it. That said the following is the only commentary I’ve ever wrote that I know for a fact Vince McMahon actually read. At RAW the week after I wrote the article Vince McMahon pulled me aside to commend me on what I wrote telling me he completely agreed with what I had to say. I doubt Vince was a frequent visitor to my site so it was likely someone else in the office who pointed out my article but I’m glad he saw it and agreed with it.

“Marijuana”

September 16, 2002

There is a current push to get Marijuana legalized in Canada. I realize there is always a push for this but the Canadian Senate is actually recommending legalization this time. I am quite obviously very anti-drug. I’m about as clean cut as you can get. If I had to choose between anti-drug and anti-American, I’d be drug free and red, white, and blue. The logic behind this new recommendation is based around a comparison to Alcohol and Tobacco. I find this logic ludicrous but not all that surprising. Comparing marijuana to current legal drugs is the best course of action when seeking approval. What we, or at least

lawmakers, need to realize is that just because these specific drugs are legal, that doesn't mean that their legalization was an entirely good idea in the first place. Making the same bad decisions again is not always the best move. Now I'm not proposing prohibition and the criminalization of tobacco, but you have to admit that a case could be made for both and perhaps a stronger one than is being presented for the legalization of marijuana. Let's look at the amount of alcoholism in the world today, not to mention the number of drinking and driving fatalities each year. I'm not sure why the human race has such a need, or at any rate such a desire to alter its brain chemically, in order to have a good time. However, it is clear for the most part we do not have the common sense or willpower to do so at a safe level.

Moreover, take a look at the can of worms that will be opened up once

legalization occurs, because once it is “in”, it’s next to impossible to get “out.” Does anyone think for a second that tobacco could obtain legalization today? It’s a proven addictive drug which causes cancer, not only in the person smoking it, but in those around the smoker as well (via second hand smoke). If smoking wasn’t a multi-billion dollar industry it would have been made illegal years ago. I have two major concerns with legalization. My biggest concern is one with second hand smoke. It’s one thing to want to impair your own brain, but the effects are never completely confined to the user. Does anyone think there won’t be hundreds of cases of Mom and Dad sitting at home smoking marijuana in the same room with their kids? How much second hand pot smoke does it take to impair an infant’s brain? I’m guessing not much, and I am definitely not in favour of seeing a bunch of stoned babies. You know this can and will

happen; far too many parents put their wants and needs ahead of the children's. There are complaints by parents in Calgary about a bi-law prohibiting small children from being seated in smoking sections in restaurants. The parents want to smoke during dinner and feel their need for a nicotine fix outweighs their kid's right to breathe fresh air. If I can borrow an expression from my father, "You can't idiot proof the world." While that is true, do we really need to give those same idiots another drug to get stupid by?

There is also the concern with impaired driving. Marijuana dulls your reflexes and slows your reaction time. Based on that, driving a vehicle while stoned on marijuana should be illegal. Are there means similar to a breathalyser to tell if you are too stoned to drive? Do we really want to increase the number of cases of impaired driving fatalities, just so some people can enjoy a

good high? There is also the problem of the second hand high. You could be at a party, never have a drink or smoke a joint, and still end up stoned enough to affect your driving responses. How is someone to gauge that, and how do we charge someone with driving while under the influence of second hand smoke? The complications from this issue are endless. If all of that isn't stupid enough, they are even recommending that if legalization does occur, that any criminal marijuana charges from the past be wiped out. This is the dumbest thing I've ever heard. If they raise the speed limit on a stretch of highway, do they erase past speeding tickets from your driving record and refund your money? Of course they don't. You broke the law at the time. You do not deserve a reprieve if the law gets changed down the road. I think the best way to look at this is as follows. With all of the things we need to improve on in this world,

should providing an easier way to get high be anywhere near the top of that list? I think not!

Something to think about till next week,
Lance

More movie quotes

This next piece is likely best commented on after the fact so I'll be back in a minute.

"The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, Again"

September 24, 2002

Let's do this in the reverse order, I feel like ending on a good note this week.

The Ugly: For those of you who missed Unforgiven this past Sunday, I took one UGLY bump. It wasn't really so much a bump as it was just getting dropped on my head. Thank you to everyone who saw the PPV and voiced their concern. You can all relax, Bubba is fine! Sorry that is a bit of an inside joke. Actually he may be the one in the worst shape on the whole deal as he apparently lost feeling in his one hand for a bit, which is what led to me getting dropped

on my head in the first place. For those who missed it, Bubba picked me up like he would for a Back Suplex. He was going to set me upside down in the turnbuckle for his new Tree of Woe Chop. Bubba had me up on his shoulder, lost feeling in his hand and dropped me backward right on my head. Lucky I got my arms back just in time and broke some of the impact or I could very well have broken my neck. Several people watching were afraid I had. I landed right on the top of my head and was knocked loopy. I was dizzy for a few minutes, but managed to finish the match and even take the finish. My neck stiffened up bad that night but thanks to some massage therapy and perhaps some guarded Karma (Thanks Paul, good advice), I'm feeling far better than I likely should.

The Bad: Okay I just said I'm feeling better than I should, but all in all it's been a painful

week and I'm feeling pretty bad (After that bump I'm just glad I have feeling). It all started with a bad bump last week, which put me in a ton of pain. I had to see my doctor and after an exam and a few X-Rays (do you have any idea how many of those you get in a wrestling career? I guarantee you it's more than "42"), it was determined that I had no significant neck injury (I was getting weird headaches from moving my neck), bruised ribs (not serious, but still not fun), and a minor disc problem in the middle of my back. Fortunately the disc is in the middle of my back because all of my ribs attach there, which helps stabilize the area and my doctor was not overly concerned with it.

The only real problem was the nerve from the disc runs all the way around my one side and was causing a lot of pain. I couldn't sit for any length of time and would have to lay flat in bed or on the floor

frequently during the day to relieve my discomfort. I spent most of my time off hobbling around like an 80-year-old man. Then of course I get back to work, get dropped on my head and take a whole bunch more bumps. Oh ain't life grand.

The Good: Time for the good (I don't want to sound in too bad of a mood). Ultimo Dragon was at the shows this week. For those of you who don't know him, he is one of the best workers I have ever had the pleasure of being in the ring with. I worked with Dragon in Japan when I worked for WAR. He worked in Mexico and Japan before a brief run in WCW. A WCW doctor screwed up his elbow with a botched surgery and forced his retirement. He did a Super J Cup tournament for New Japan one year and had incredible matches. It was great seeing Dragon again, and it looks like he may try a comeback. Dragon at 75% is still

better than most of us at 100%. Don't go anywhere. There is more "good" coming. After RAW I was feeling like crap but Christian dragged me to a Dave and Busters for dinner. He had a red eye flight out of LA and had time to kill. We ended up there with Hurricane and a couple members of the creative team.

Dave and Busters, for those of you who have never been, is a restaurant/amusement park. Okay maybe not an amusement park but they have video games, sports games, and even a virtual reality type ride. I've never been to one before, because as you know, I am no fun whatsoever and never go out (At least that is the rumour, and who am I do argue). After our food I was foolishly challenged to shoot some hoops at a free throw game with caged in baskets and a shot clock. I guess last time this crew got together at a D&B's there had been some stiff competition. Now not to name any names

but someone (a guy with a very interactive website from Calgary…Alberta, Canada) kicked @$$ big time. This guy (a really handsome man, from what I'm told) went undefeated and contrary to his usually modest behaviour bragged about it all night. In the one match up against his tag team partner, he slaughtered the poor sap (40-12), which coincidently enough is about the same bump ratio they have in their tag team matches. Once the workhorse, always the workhorse! (LOL)

All in all, a rather fun end to a very painful week; till next week, BUBBA…Get the… ICE!!!!

Lance

Challenging Ultimo Dragon for the IJ Jr.

Heavyweight Title in Tokyo Japan, January 1996

Good the Bad and the Ugly, looking back.

Just a few updates on what you just read. If you plan to go back to find the PPV match where Bubba dropped me on my head, don't bother. Unless you have a copy of the live PPV feed you won't be able to see it. The fall looked so bad WWE edited the spot off the DVD release. It's a shame too because the look on Booker T's face after I landed on my head was priceless. Actually he held the surprised look on his face so long it's probably still on the DVD and without seeing the fall that caused his reaction it's probably even funnier. Also, I thought it would be fun to stooge off who on the creative team was out with us that night. I'm not sure why I didn't name him the first

time around but the WWE writer that handsome guy from Calgary whooped in basketball was Brian Gewirtz. Brian's a great guy and I had a lot of fun working with him while in WWE. He even humped my leg one time, during a pre-taped segment backstage, which the WWE photo department has evidence of. It's a long story and hopefully I wrote about it in a commentary coming up.

Being quite serious for a minute

It's amazing how selective your memory can be. While I remember most of the fun stories from my career, the serious ones or the ones dealing with injures, etc. I seem to forget. This next piece I have no recollection of and I'm glad my daughter has no recollection of it either. I hope this next story gives you some insight into what the real life of a pro-wrestler is like and maybe make you respect the hardships that go into doing what we do. I think this also goes a long way in explaining to you why I retired from WWE at such a young age.

Also I reference the "Ross Report" in the article which was a weekly column that Jim Ross wrote for WWE.com. He gave injury updates for talent and offered his own

insight and opinions on what was going on in the wild and whacky world of the WWE.

"Wrestling: How fake is it?"

October 8, 2002

If you remember from a couple weeks ago, I was pretty banged up. I had bruised ribs from a bad bump and then the sore neck from the ugly PPV bump. When I got home I had to ask my kids to take it easy on me. They usually jump on me the second I walk through the door Tuesday afternoon. I'm talking literally here, they run at me and all but tackle me in the hallway. It's a great feeling when you see smiling faces screaming Daddy running to hug you but with the shape I was in I had to ask them to be very careful. I didn't much think of it at the time, but I guess this made a stronger impression on my 6-year old than I thought.

This past week while I was tucking my daughter into bed she gets very serious (perhaps that's hereditary) and asks me an interesting question. "Daddy if your wrestling is fake, why do you get hurt? Why is your back and neck always sore?" I cringed when she used the word "fake" because I hate that word, but I have emphasized to her many times that what I do isn't real. She doesn't react well to violence so any time she sees me wrestle (which isn't often) I try to make sure she understands that we are only pretending to hurt each other and we are more or less just playing.

So here I am stuck trying to explain to a very concerned 6-year old that we aren't really hurting each other but that injuries can and do happen. I want my daughter to think that what I do is safe, so she doesn't worry about me, but that's not so easy considering that she knows I'm in pain a lot

at home. It's hard to explain that a sport where the participants all work together and try to protect each other has such a high injury rate. Take a look at the Ross Report at wwe.com and the first page or two is always the injury report. We've had 6 or more guys out for serious neck surgery, as well as guys with shoulder, back, and knee trouble. The truth be told, wrestling isn't as fake as you would think, or safe as I'd like her to believe. My sore back and neck, all of my aches and pains, don't add up to enough to even make me one of the unlucky ones. Truthfully I'm quite lucky (touch wood). I have never been injured badly enough to need surgery and my goal is to retire that way. I don't know how my daughter would take me being laid up after surgery and I don't want to find out.

So here is how I explained it to my daughter. I told her, "You know how you and Rachel (her sister) play together downstairs, how you run around and chase

each other? You're just having fun and never mean to get hurt, but sometimes you trip or bump into your sister and one of you falls down and gets hurt. You bang your knee or hit your head on the coffee table. You get hurt but it's just an accident. That's sort of what happens to me at work. Sometimes we fall down wrong and get hurt. We don't plan on it; it's just an accident." This seemed to hit home with my daughter. She is after all a bit of a klutz and falls down all the time, so she can relate. I think for now she thinks I'm safe. I will have to make a point to no-sell my aches and pains better at home. As much as I like that excited smile from my girls when I get home, I hate that look of concern and fear on their faces when I'm hurt. It's strange when you do this as long as I have, you get used to all of the aches and pains and minimize the risks involved in what we do. You pretty much have to, to avoid losing your nerve. My daughter's concern

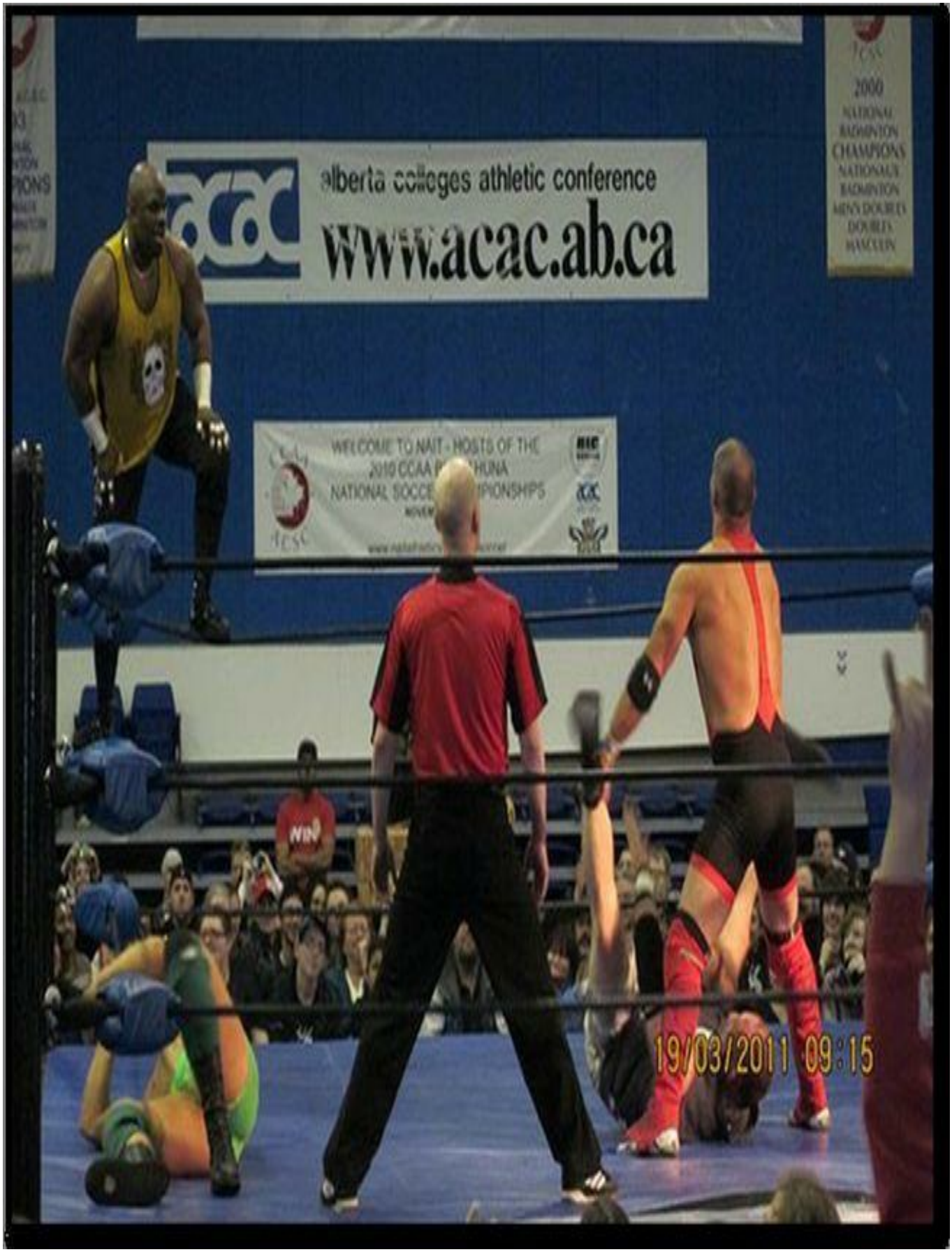
combined with my very scary bump on the PPV last month has reminded me just how dangerous the things I do are, and how lucky I've been.

Till next week, let's be careful out there,
Lance

You Can't See (make that remember) Me

I am constantly reminded going back over these commentaries of how bad my memory is. In this next piece I briefly comment on a live event match in Edmonton I had with John Cena. I don't talk much about it, because back then John Cena was just a young kid they hoped had potential and working with him was more of a step down than a step up. John's place on the card back then not withstanding you'd think I would at least remember it. I have no recollection of the match or even wrestling in Edmonton for that matter. Early in 2011 I wrestled a match in Edmonton for PWA and in the build for that match I actually promoted that it would be the first time I

ever wrestled in Edmonton. During the promo a fan even yelled from the crowd that I was a liar, but is it lying if you honestly believe what you are saying? For the record I defeated the young John Cena that night in Edmonton, I believe with a Superkick. I hope the fans in attendance that night remember the match better than I do.


alberta colleges athletic conference
www.acac.ab.ca
2000
CHAMPIONS
WELCOME TO NAIT - HOSTS OF THE
NATIONAL
19/03/2011 09:15

The Match I thought was my first match in Edmonton

Me & Brother Devon vs. Bully Rey & Dylan Knight

"This and That"

October 22, 2002

Sorry I didn't get a commentary up last week, but my schedule is taking its toll on me and I needed the down time. It has been a rather eventful and uncharacteristic week and a half. I don't have an inspiration for a commentary this week, and like last week, my time is at a premium. In an effort to get something posted, I will simply talk about a few of the uncharacteristic events of the last 10 days. Last week I worked the SmackDown house shows. This was a lot of fun for several reasons; first off they were local shows for me (Calgary and Edmonton). Anytime I don't have to get on a plane to go to work it's a very good thing. Even better

was that my family could come to the shows. My Wife and Brother hit both shows and my Mom and Grandfather attended just the Calgary shot. My grandfather is a wrestling fan from WAY back so he had a lot of fun. I also wrestled as a babyface on both shows, which was both weird and exciting. It's a completely different mindset being a face and it's been a while since I've done it. I worked John Cena in Edmonton and had a pretty decent match and followed up with D'Von in Calgary. I had to dig into my closet and pull out a few of my old babyface maneuvers for the hometown crowds, who ended up seeing a somewhat less than serious Lance Storm. I even managed a small Hart tribute in my Calgary match using an old Owen Hart baby face high spot, and I borrowed the Sharpshooter for a finisher in honour of Bret. The crowd loved both and I hope they were taken as intended, as a tribute to two of the very best this business

has ever seen.

For those of you who are curious which Owen spot I used, it was one he used more in his Stampede days or in his original Blue Blazer run. You hold the heel's hand, run and leap to the top rope so that you're standing on the top rope in the middle rather than the turnbuckle, drop down on your butt, and back flip into the ring and land on your feet. I did the move when I first broke in but likely haven't done it in 10 years. Matt Hardy thought I was crazy trying it in front of a crowd after that many years but I managed to stick the flip in spite of the rust and had a ball doing so; I always loved that move. The Sharpshooter got the biggest pop of the match (big surprise) and I realized when I was putting it on that I've never used the thing in a match before; I'm lucky I managed to get it on right. If I screwed that up in Calgary they'd likely disown me. I'd end up with more heat than

Earl Hebner (okay, maybe not that much). This match also gave me my elusive Saddle Dome match. I've worked in Calgary for WWE twice before and never managed a wrestle a match. Let me tell you it was worth the wait and the Calgary crowd gave me a huge welcome. Thank you to everyone; it's fans like you that make Calgary… Alberta, Canada the "Wrestling Capital of the World!" I'm proud to call this city "HOME."

Now on to this week: WOW, new tights, or rather trunks. I'm curious to hear what people thought. Other than some fans in Austria (CWA 1993) no one has ever seen me work in trunks. The idea came from the office back when the Un-Americans were going strong, but that wrapped up before the outfit was finished. I was set for a change and a new feel so I decided to go through with the change anyway. It felt really weird, let me tell you. For the most part I got

positive feedback from the back (a few Shamrock cracks not withstanding) but I will have to see for myself. I was also very glad to set the record straight as to the Un-American gimmick and my teaming with Regal. I've gotten a lot of questions of late and now we all know for sure. Regal and I are a new team and Test and Christian have their own respective directions. I'm anxious to take the Storm/Regal team places most teams don't go. We are hoping to be a bit more traditional in our wrestling style and work in some of that European flavor. I've got a fair bit of experience with that style of work, so we both hope we can develop a unique classic wrestling style. Time will tell.

Till next week,
Lance

The Middle East

The next article is a jump back in time to a very ill-fated 2 week trip I took to Lebanon in the summer of 1992. My road schedule had me super busy so I took this tale out of the first draft I had started for my autobiography I started in 2000. It's far more to the point than I would like but when I was working on the bio I was just trying to get all the details down first, figuring I would round out and make the story more enjoyable in the next draft. When I posted it on the site I divided it into 3 separate commentaries but I've recombined them to make them easier to read. I should also give you some background info because I mention a guy named Fred Jung a lot and without the earlier tales from my

autobiography you likely won't know who he is. Fred Jung was a promoter Jericho and I worked with when we first broke in. He was and likely still is, at least in my opinion, a complete conman shyster. He was a bit younger than me but carried himself like he was an important player in the business which he most certainly was not. He kept Chris and I on a string for a year or so while dangling a trip to Japan in front of us. The Japan deal would eventually happen (Oct of 1991) but it was not what he promised and turned into a bit of a fiasco. I hope you enjoy the story. I'll include some photos from the trip at the end.

“Lebanon 1992”

October 29, 2002

I’m short on time and inspiration, so I searched some of the stories I’ve been working on for my autobiography (if I ever finish one). This is the tale of my trip to Lebanon Aug. 1992. I’m not even sure how this trip came about. The promoter was a guy named Abe Awad who was Lebanese, but lived in the States. He contacted “Gentleman” Chris Adams to book the tour. With a U.S. political boycott, Chris couldn’t book any Americans for the tour. Chris booked Mando & Chavo Guerrero as well as a young Mexican kid who wrestled under a mask as El Odas. When I say Chavo, I mean Chavo Sr. not Chavo Jr., who I work with

now in WCW. For additional talent, Chris contacted Gama Singh in Calgary who in turn contacted Steve Gillespie who hooked me up. It's interesting the amount of people involved in getting booked on some trips. I don't know if it was Steve's or Gama's call but it was made clear that anyone working with Fred Jung would not be booked on this trip. I had just split with Jericho and no longer wanted to deal with Fred so I was eager to get a decent booking on my own. As such, despite the Middle East being a dangerous part of the world to be going to, I jumped at the chance for this trip. I knew Gama had been around the world and I considered him a pretty smart guy so if he thought this was a safe enough trip to go on then so did I.

Gama Singh, Garry Morrow, Steve Gillespie, myself and a few other local green workers rounded out the trip. I was told that I would receive $1,000.00/week for the 2-

week trip and the promoter would cover both hotel and airfare. From what little experience I had this sounded pretty standard so I agreed and prepared for the trip. The trip was in August so I had to take two weeks off from teaching the Hart camp. Camp only paid $500.00 Cnd./week so this was a better deal. Ed had no problems giving me the time off; especially since it was a sign I had completely severed ties with Fred. Ed didn't even dock my pay for going. When our tickets arrived we were booked on the longest milk run imaginable. Our flight took us from Calgary to Dallas, where we hooked up with Chris Adams and our Mexican coworkers. We were booked with about a 4 hours layover to enable all of us to connect and get on the same flight. From Dallas we headed to Boston and from Boston to London, Heathrow. This is where the trip got strange. With the U.S. boycott we couldn't have connecting tickets to Beirut

via the U.S. so we had completely separate tickets booked, which we had to pick up in London. Because of this we had yet another extensive layover, I think 5 - 6 hours. I had no idea what I was doing and just followed Gama around hoping not to look like too much of a lost mark. We eventually found Abe Awad who had our tickets but no money. We were supposed to be paid up front for the tour, which I was told wasn't that unusual on overseas trips. Chris was the point man for all negotiation. Everyone from Calgary followed Gama's lead and Gama and the Guerreros seemed comfortable following Chris. The debate over turning back or continuing on got quite heated and we actually had a standoff at the gate before we finally gave in and agreed to fly to Beirut. Abe promised that we would be paid before our first match.

Our tickets, when we received them, weren't even for Beirut. They were for Cairo.

I still don't understand that one. We were told it was a political thing and that the flight would go to Beirut in spite of our ticket saying Cairo. I've flown a lot of airlines over the years but Middle East Airlines takes the cake. I swear there was duct tape holding the plane together. The plane stunk and was very crowded. I kept expecting chickens and goats to escape from the overhead bins. If we weren't worried enough about going to the middle east, everyone on board kept asking us why on earth we would be going there by choice. I had no idea what I was getting into, so I just hoped for the best. You know the "It won't happen to me" thing? I was counting on that a fair bit by this point. The airport in Beirut felt like a War Zone. Everywhere I looked there were soldiers with automatic weapons. We were ushered into a separate customs area where we waited in confusion. Between the guns and the language I was scared to

death. I don't like guns. Truth be told, I may even dislike guns more than I do Fred Jung, which is saying a lot. I think the nod goes to guns because, to my knowledge, despite being a world-class pain in the ass, Fred hasn't actually killed anyone. He's killed a few careers mind you, but no actual people. If you've never heard anyone speak Arabic before you may not understand why it's such a scary language. Arabic isn't really spoken as much as it is barked, or at least that's the way it sounds when you don't understand it.

Finally a few gun toting, Arabic barking officials took our passports and escorted us through customs. I know you aren't supposed to surrender your passport under any circumstances, and I think it's even illegal for them to take them from us, but when a guy with a machine gun barks orders at me, I tend to do what I'm told. I suppose I should use the word "always" instead of

“tend”, “tend” implies that I occasionally don’t do what I’m told under those conditions, which would be inaccurate. Perhaps you would do different but that’s your choice and this is my book. From there we were rushed out of the airport and through a crowd of what we guessed were screaming fans. We were put in cars to be driven to Tierre Lebanon where we would spend our first week. I shared the ride with Mando who kept pointing out tanks and suggesting that if things went sour, stealing a tank might be our only chance of getting out of the country. I was pretty sure he was joking. The hotel in Tierre was a dump, but I don’t think that was the promoter’s fault. The whole city was like that. Most of the buildings were bombed out and abandoned. I have never seen a country ravaged by war, so I found it quite amazing. What amazed me more was how proud everyone there was of their country. Everyone kept saying

to me “Lebanon, beautiful yes?” I of course agreed with them despite my true feelings. I don’t know whether it was out of blind faith that they loved their country so much or whether they had just never seen anything nicer before.

The hotel, as I was saying, was a dump! We doubled up in the rooms, and I roomed with Mando. We were one of the luckier ones as our door locked and our toilet actually had a seat on it, two definite signs of luxurious accommodations. We would all eat together on the main floor of the hotel and would basically have to eat whatever they served us. Breakfast consisted of hard-boiled eggs and lunch and dinner was usually an unidentifiable crapshoot, but I managed to avoid going hungry. I was also the only guy who managed to avoid diarrhea. We all avoided the water but, on the recommendation of a travel agent, I also avoided vegetables, which contain a lot of

water. I don't know whether the rest of the crew took more trips to the bathroom or the drug store for Imodium. Our first morning Mando and Gerry decided to go for a walk and to check out the sites. I thought they were nuts, but did not want to appear chicken, so I tagged along. Walking through a foreign war zone without a passport or any I.D. scared the hell out of me. We walked a few blocks before turning a corner and facing our first military blockade. Mando and Gerry froze immediately; I was relieved to know I wasn't the only one who was scared. We figured turning around and leaving would look suspicious so we pressed on. They started barking at us and making weird hand gestures. We were terrified. Finally Mando realized they were doing wrestling poses and must have known who we were. We smiled and nodded our heads as we moved passed the blockade. We were relieved to know that we were cool with the

military. Even with this knowledge we quickly made our way back to the hotel where we were told not to leave the hotel again without an armed escort.

We didn't have phones at the hotel, at least not ones we could call overseas with so we had to find a way to get word home that we were all right. We finally convinced one of the guards to take Steve to an overseas phone so he could call his wife. He would have his wife relay messages to everyone else that we were all fine. All of the shows in Tierre were held at the same venue, which was an outdoor soccer field. The heels changed in a nearby building while the babyfaces (I was a face) used a military tent on the field as a locker room. Mando, Chavo and Gerry were our top heels and Chris, Gama and I the top babyfaces. Chris was our only real draw. They actually got World Class Championship Wrestling from Dallas on their local T.V. so "Gentleman" Chris

Adams was over pretty huge. Come the first show we still didn't get our money but with them having all the guns we knew the only chance of getting any money at this point was to work. The ring was a disaster. The apron was about 5 feet high and the ropes were loose as hell, but I worked mostly with guys I'd worked before so I had good matches. Each night there was some strange experience or another. With so many of us being from Calgary, we wanted to make the show seem more international than it was. I was wearing blue and white tights at the time so someone came up with the idea of billing me from Denmark. I didn't figure it would matter so I said sure. I couldn't have been more wrong. There were some UN peacekeepers over there from Denmark, who got quite irate when they yelled at me in Dutch and I did not respond. I was even invited to their camp or base to do an interview for a large newspaper from

Denmark. Thankfully I managed to weasel my way out of that one.

Houses (attendance) were bad so Chris, in an attempt to spark interest, decided to heat things up by having Mando and Chavo lay him out. They jumped him after the match and Chris got juice (He bled). As the medical staff stretchered him out, Mando and Chavo attacked him in the ambulance. Apparently no one smartened up our guards beforehand because they all pulled guns on Mando & Chavo. I saw the one guy put his gun to Mando's head. I was so scared for Mando, yet at the same time relieved that I was a babyface.

We toned down the angles after that and with the constant battle over money, our work rate as well. Even with toning down the work rate, I managed to get hurt. I think it was in my third match when I hurt my ribs. I took a couple nights off and reffed instead but there was no way I was going to

a hospital over there. Mando really tried to take care of me when I got hurt. I showed him a lot of respect throughout the trip so I think he liked me. He called me kid the whole trip, but he treated me well and offered me a ton of helpful advice. I had two positive experiences while in Tierre. The first was getting to swim in the Mediterranean Sea. I'm not much of a saltwater fan but swimming the Mediterranean was a unique experience not too many people get a chance to do. We didn't work until the evening so a couple times during the day they escorted us to the beach. The water was hot and very dirty but we all swam until we started getting stung by jellyfish. The other interesting experience was getting to fire a Russian machine gun. Chris had managed to buddy up with a couple of our guards; he was after all a pretty big celebrity over there. He convinced them to take him somewhere where he could fire their guns. Chris asked if

I wanted to tag along so I went. We had to drive quite a ways because they weren't allowed to fire their guns in a secure area. We therefore had to drive into the hills to a non-secure area. As we drove into the hills Chris and I both realized these guys could just shoot us and leave us for dead if they wanted to.

Needless to say, since I'm writing this book, they didn't. When we reached our destination they walked us off the road and down into a ravine. They were very cautious when letting us handle their guns but they did let us fire them. I had never fired anything more powerful than a pellet gun so this thing amazed me. The gun was a Russian AK-47 and the noise and power of the thing was incredible. They would put 10 shells or bullets into the gun and set it for fully automatic. I pulled the trigger and with the kickback of the gun I was shooting damn near straight up in the air before I had time

to react and pull the gun back down toward my target. Before I knew it, my 10 shots had been fired. The strange thing was I only heard the first three shots. The gun was so loud that by the third, my ears were ringing so bad I didn't hear the last 7. I can only imagine the deafening sound of being at war and having these things being fired all around me. We fired a couple dozen rounds each, took some pictures and headed back to the hotel. Our last day in Tierre the money battles got even more heated. We had gotten a bit of an advance, but were still very behind on payment. That morning when we tried to leave our floor, armed guards at the stairs turned us back. We were now under house arrest, being held on our floor basically at gunpoint and we still didn't have our passports and to our knowledge there was no record of us even being in the country. I was so scared I wasn't even sure I would ever be leaving this country alive. I

honestly feared for my life. We no longer cared about our money. We all just wanted to do whatever they wanted, and go home. Hell we still had another week to do in Beirut. At our last Tier show things got worse.

While I stood watching the matches, a gunshot goes off and I see a guy maybe 30 feet away from me go down. He had been shot in the neck. A couple more shots were fired as I hit the tent looking for whatever cover I could find. Chaos broke out and we were rushed to our bus and driven back to the hotel with armed guards hanging out the windows and doors with their guns cocked and ready. In the morning our bus was waiting again with gunmen hanging out the windows. We could see bombs going off in the distance and hear machine gun fire. I was literally underneath my bus seat the whole drive to Beirut. Once in Beirut, things were much quieter and safer. We were told

it was the arena owner who had been shot and all the added security had been due to political unrest and not because of our fighting over money. The house arrest had been for our safety. The hotel in Beirut was quite nice and this time I roomed with Gama. Beirut must have been a lot safer too, because they let us walk the streets alone and most of our security team disappeared. While walking the streets we even managed to do a bit of shopping. We were still fighting for our money but had been paid a little from the gate a couple nights so we had some Lira we wanted to get rid of. The strangest thing was all price tags in stores were in U.S. $. Apparently the Lira devalues so often that they price things in U.S. $ to avoid having to change price tags daily. They simply posted the current exchange rate at the front of the store and had calculators on all the shopping carts. The rate would change sometimes as often as 3

or 4 times a day. Because of the rapid inflation everyone in the country tried to spend their money as soon as they got it. Keeping cash for as long as a day or two could cost you upwards of 50% of your initial investment.

I had heard gold and jewelry was cheap in the Middle East, so I found a jewelry store hoping to find something for Tina. I found a nice birthstone ring in 18 carat gold that only cost me $68.00 US. The stone ended up being a fake but the band ended up being worth a little over $600.00 Cnd. In addition to shopping, Chris and I even managed to find a gym. It was the worst gym I've ever seen in my life, but at least it was a gym. It was in a bombed out cement building that had no windows or doors. It wasn't a bunker, mind you. It had a doorway and windows; it just didn't have any glass in the windows or door in the doorway. It didn't even have a floor. You stood on the same dirt inside as

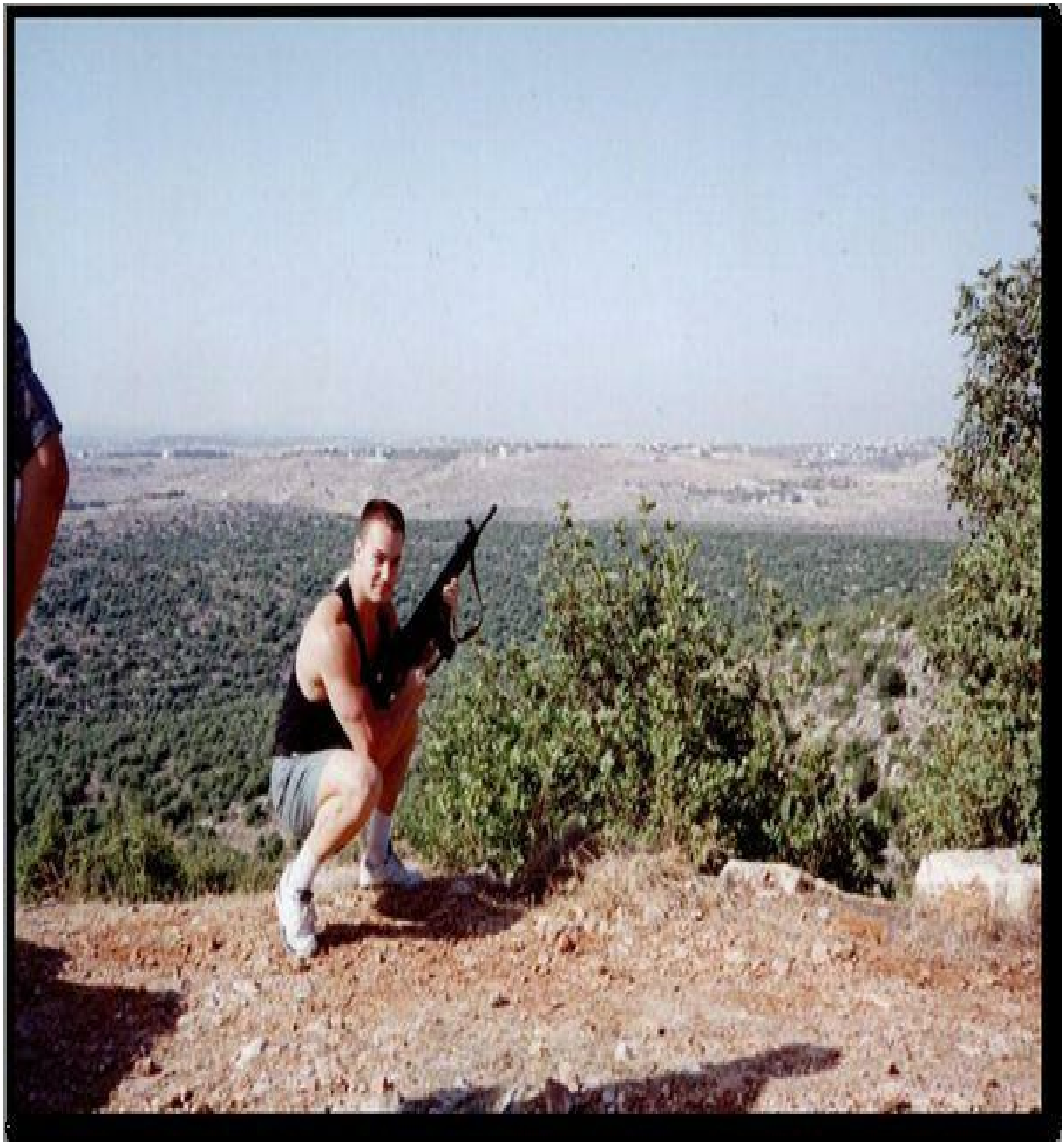
you did outside. They had candles so you could train after dark and the most pre-historic set of weights I'd ever used. With about $300.00 and a stop at a couple garage sales you could better equip your garage. They had a pipe hanging by rope from the ceiling and a bench press and a bunch of mismatched dumbbells. We trained the best we could while Chris kept making up excuses for the locals as to why he wasn't training as heavy as usual. I always hate guys who do this, but I guess once a worker always a worker.

The shows in Beirut were again held on a soccer field, but this time we had a huge cement stadium. The place had lights, but felt more like a prison than a locker room. These shows didn't draw either, so we knew we had no chance of getting our money. We decided to finish all the shows and just try to get home safe. They returned our passports, which now had visas in them, so I guess they

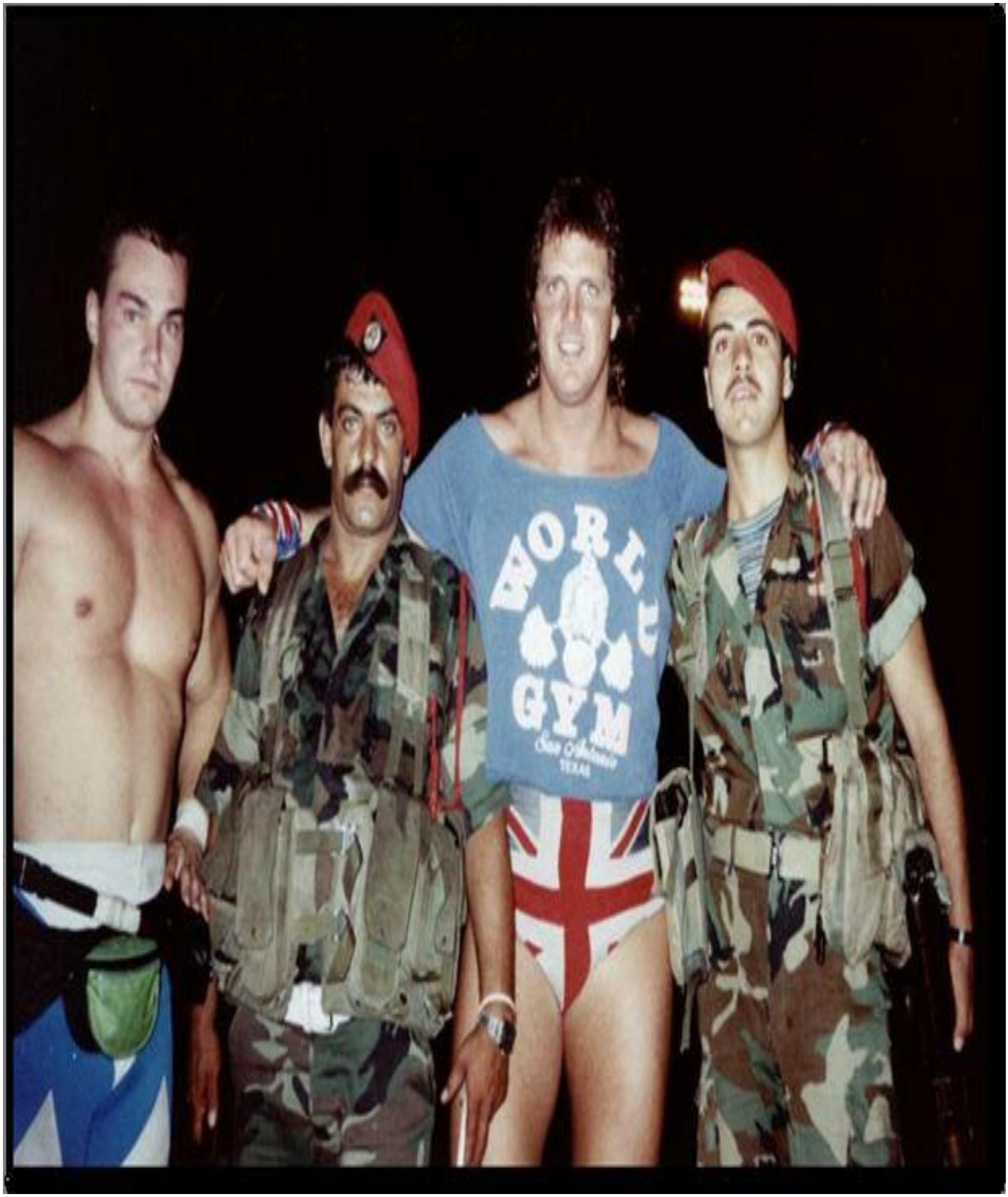
took them for reasons other than holding us hostage. After the last show they took us to the airport. I was so excited about going home I didn't even care how shafted I'd gotten on my money. We flew to London Heathrow again, but unfortunately had a tight connection out of Gatwick, which would be impossible to make. Since the tickets were booked completely separate missing the connection was our fault. The next flight out on that carrier (AA) that we could get on wasn't for 2 days and we were responsible for our own accommodations. Gama thought he might be able to convince Air Canada to honour our tickets so we parted ways with Chris, Mando, and Chavo. Chris insisted he was going to fight Abe Awad for our money back in the states, but I wasn't holding my breath. Mando wished me luck and called me Lance instead of "kid" for the first time. That meant a lot to me as I had a ton of respect for him.

Thankfully Gama managed to sweet talk Air Canada and we ended up with a direct London to Calgary flight. I landed at home with $500.00 US, a nice ring for my girlfriend and a new appreciation for life in Canada. Tina liked the ring, but wanted to kill me for not phoning her during the trip. As it turned out, Steve's wife hadn't bothered to relay his message to anyone, so no one else knew we were all right. Tina and I had just taken possession of our first apartment together the day before I left. She had to move everything in herself and then spend the next two weeks wondering if I was still alive. As scared as I was being over there knowing what was going on, I can't imagine how scared she must have been being at home not knowing and not hearing from me. We've never talked about it, but I think on some level she thought that I was dead. What a hell of a way to start a serious relationship.

Till next week,
Lance



In the hills of Lebanon with an AK 47


GYM
TEXAS

With the later “Gentleman” Chris Adams and our guards

Yes I’m wearing 3 Fanny Packs, it’s a long story

From Bad to Worse

From my tale of working in Lebanon in 1992, we jump to my story of my WWE trip to India in 2002. I've got quite a bit to say about this trip but I think it's best to let you read the original column first and add to it after the fact. See you soon.

"Sorry Phil I Lied"

November 24, 2002

Last week at TV, Phil (one of WWE's Internet guys) asked me if I was looking forward to our pending three show trip to India. I told him I was. He was very surprised at my response and told me that I was the first person that he's asked that was looking forward to the trip. I said that I was looking forward to the free time on the plane to get some reading done, as well as having the chance to finally watch Tough Enough. I had still never seen the first season and I borrowed the DVD from Steven Richards in hopes of finally seeing the show. I also told Phil I enjoyed going places I've never been before for the experience of

seeing something new. While I may not have actually lied to Phil, as this commentaries title indicates, I would most definitely like to change my answer!

This trip was the most grueling trip I've ever been on. The travel schedule was brutal and if I can borrow a quote from a Chris Jericho promo "India is a very very bad place." Okay it isn't really bad, but it sure is dirty and depressing. The poverty and filthy conditions of the country were unbelievable. People actually live in the streets in makeshift tents and shacks. We saw men, women, and children going to the bathroom in the streets. We would see someone walking on the sidewalk; they would just stop, hike up their skirt or drop the pants, and crap right in the street with people watching. It was the filthiest, most disgusting place I've ever been. The poverty level was unbelievable; you don't realize how lucky you are until you are in a place

like this. Watching little naked babies running around in the filth was depressing and hard to take. I could handle seeing the poverty but seeing the kids hit too close to home for me. I found myself avoiding looking out the bus windows as we drove through the streets.

If that wasn't bad enough, travel was, as I mentioned earlier, off the charts. We left Tuesday night, it took us 25 hours door to door, and we arrived at our hotel in Delhi at about 3 in the morning. We worked every day while there, and had to fly after each show to the next town. We left our hotel every evening at 5 pm and didn't get to our next hotel till about 3 am each night. It was an additional 5 hours of travel each day. Our flight home was the night after our last show so we didn't even get a chance to catch our breath before embarking on our 27-hour trip home. In total for the round trip we logged just over 60 hours of travel in 5 days. That's

averaging 12+ hours of travel per day. On top of that we had to work three times. I only worked twice, but that is another story I will get to next.

With the country being as dirty as it was, our health was even an issue. We had to get several shots before heading over, as well as take malaria pills. We only ate food at our hotel and never drank the water. If the bottled water wasn't sealed when we got to it we didn't touch it. We stayed in really nice hotels and the catering was quite good. The office went to great lengths to make sure we were taken care of so that none of us got sick. That said, several of us, including yours truly got very ill. Like all good tag teams William Regal and I got sick together, and he likely had it the worst of any of us. I may have been a close second but my illness didn't have the staying power his did. I started feeling ill Saturday morning and spent all of that day in bed. When it came

time to head to the show I could barely walk. I was so weak it was all I could do to stand up. I still went to the show and offered to work, but I looked like I was on my death bed, and I didn't put up much of a fight when they told me I wasn't working (It would have been interesting to see what kind of match I could have put out in that condition). They had a doctor check me out and sent me back to the hotel. The doctor said I had an amoebic infection from either the food or the water. I'm not sure which it was but it's not like it really mattered. The doctor gave me some pills to take and I was back in bed. I slept 16 hours Sat. and still had a hard time finding the energy to get up and head to the airport for the flight home.

That's right, I got to fly home feeling that shitty. Fortunately I started kicking out and feeling better about halfway through the first leg of our trip home so the trip wasn't as bad as it could have been. When I

got home it was pretty much just the jet lag and fatigue I was dealing with. That alone should still make for an interesting day of TV on Monday. In retrospect part of me is glad that I can say I've been to India and seen it, but never in a million years would I want to go back. Lebanon was the Garden of Eden compared to this place!

Till next week,

Lance

The outdoor arena in Mumbai, India

Chris Jericho, Chris Nowinski, and I,
arrive at the hotel
exhausted and delirious from travel

With the doormen at the hotel in Delhi

and you thought I looked serious

India Post Script

In the commentary I mentioned how we all got ill, but at the time I had no idea how bad it would actually get. At TV on Monday they were going to cut an angle between Booker T and Goldust and the World Tag Team Champs, Chris Jericho and Christian. The idea was to cut an angle that would set up a title change at a live event the following weekend. If memory serves it was in El Paso TX, with the logic being that it was the first time WWE had been there in a while and we were running a brand new building. It was as great building and ticket sales were really strong so arena footage from the live event would look great when they aired it on TV the following week, and switching the titles on a live event might

help ticket sales on other live events by sending the message that important things can happen on the road. Well the angle never happened because Booker T was hospitalized Monday during the day, for dehydration from an illness he picked up in India. He was actually stretchered out of the building with an IV in his arm, and since they weren't able to cut the angle on TV they couldn't do the title switch in El Paso, and the entire plan was dead in the water. Booker had to take a week or two off but did return to eventually win the World Tag Titles with Goldust.

That was not the end to India's wrath or its effect on the World tag team title picture. William Regal and I eventually won the World tag team titles from Booker and Goldust with our title run running into early 2003. At the No Way Out PPV in Montreal in Feb. of 2003 his Lordship took a body slam from Kane and was completely knocked out.

No one really understands how but he laid there on the mat like he was dead. He later told us that it felt like an out of body experience and he was more at peace and happy than any time in his life. He would come to and finish the match but his health took a real turn for the worse after that and after a trip to the doctor was told he had serious heart problems and would probably never wrestle again. He would eventually prove doctors wrong and return but it was more than a year long ordeal and he is not only lucky to be back wrestling but lucky to even be alive, and doctors believe his illness all started with whatever virus he contracted in India. Because of his illness we were stripped of the tag team titles, which ended up costing me my match at WrestleMania XIX. William and I are in the program for the event as defending champs but because of the titles being switched to Chief Morley and I, our title match with RVD and Kane

got bumped off the main show and ended up as the live pre-show match that aired on TV. I ended up retiring from WWE without ever having an official WrestleMania match all because of that dreadful trip to India.

Bouncer Life

The next two commentaries cover a great non-wrestling part of my life. In the beginning of my career I supplemented my income as a bouncer in a bar called Malarkey's. I'm hoping you are familiar with the place seeing that I mentioned it earlier in this book in my Rick Applegate tribute. It was a great place and the following are a few great tales from my bouncer days there. I hope you enjoy them even half as much as I did reading them back just now. On a sad note Tom Kurtovic our manager at Malarkey's was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer. In true Malarkey's fashion there was a large get together this past Dec. and most of the staff from back in the day got together one last time to reminisce and

say goodbye. Unfortunately I was out of town for the get together but my wife went and there was a great turn out.

"Malarkeys: Part 1"

December 3, 2002

I've been asked several times to tell a few of my past bouncer stories. I worked several years as a doorman, and bars always provide good story material. I didn't have time for a commentary this week, so I searched out my "Malarkeys" chapter from my very much in progress autobiography. This will take 2 commentaries to tell, and this first part really just sets the stage for the second part. Enjoy! In addition to helping me move into Calgary Rosa (former girlfriend) also played a big role in getting me my favourite, non-wrestling job. Chris (Jericho) and I were out with Rosa and a friend of hers and the four of us stopped by

to see Tony (her brother) at Malarkey's, a bar he bounced at. Tony introduced us to his boss, Tom Kurtovic, who was, and is, a huge wrestling fan. Tom had been having trouble at the bar and needed doormen, so he offered us both jobs. We accepted the job with the understanding that we would occasionally need time off to wrestle. This job could not have worked out better. It provided a decent steady income and Tom always gave us the time off we needed. Chris lasted maybe a year or 2, but I worked off and on at Malarkey's for close to 5 years. I had to be rehired a couple of times after taking extremely long hiatuses to wrestle, but Tom always jumped at the chance to have me back. I think Chris and I had only two or three shifts under our belts when we had to take three weeks off for our first trip to Japan.

Malarkeys took on a life of its own; everyone who ever worked there became

part of a very large family. An extremely screwed up dysfunctional family, but a family just the same. Our family was divided into three groups. There were the waitresses, who Tom rode pretty hard; if they stopped moving for one second he would be on them with cries of “SELL! SELL! SELL!” There were the bartenders, who he cut a little bit of slack to. Then there were us doormen. Tom loved hanging out with the boys, so we could pretty much do what we liked. We were a colourful cast of characters. Tom can best be described as a better-kept version of Paul Heyman. Tom even looks like him, and because of this we called him Tom E., he was after all our manager. On the door we had Tony who we just called Ponticorvo, Hammer, Creampuff, Jericho and I. There were others who wandered in and out but the 4 of us sans Ponticorvo were “The Boys.” Hammer was an experience. He had a heart of gold but unfortunately not much else on

his body or in his life works that well. Hammer was always fighting a barrage of health problems, and relationship disasters. He was a big guy with an ample midsection, no waist and no hips. We often joked that the 9th wonder of the world wasn't André the Giant (Chyna wasn't around then), but instead, it was how Hammer kept his pants up. Hammer's pants were doing the Konnan gimmick years before it became popular.

Creampuff and I remain friends to this day. His real name is Scot Youngblutt and he is my best non-wrestling friend. We always called him Scotty; the Creampuff thing was a nickname that never stuck despite his best efforts. It certainly isn't a great nickname but he was trying to get it to stick in order to erase a previous one he didn't want people to remember. I'm one of the few people who remember it, but I won't divulge it here. I'll try to sneak it into the book somewhere down the line just to make him mad. Chris

was “Biff”, because it suited him. The long blonde hair, the carefree, doesn’t sweat anything, surfer type attitude. We even dubbed the bar “Biff’s on McLeod” (The bar was on McLeod Trail, in Calgary). Chris always hung out by the DJ booth drumming on his chest and leg, to his favourite KISS tunes. Whenever Chris worked there seemed to be at least a 3 KISS song minimum. For those of you who don’t know Chris is a huge KISS mark and if you ever want to start a week long debate, try to convince him that Gene Simons is way cooler than Paul Stanley. Chris would always back you in a fight, if he saw it, but other than that he was at the booth minding his own business. We couldn’t put him on the front door; he was too social and after his first attempt we never let him do head counts either. Every once in a while we would have to do a manual head count to make sure we weren’t over capacity. One of us would walk the club

with a counter and manually count everyone. Malarkey's held about 300-350 people. Well, that's what we let it hold anyway. We were jammed packed that night and Chris came back with about 220. I don't know whether he stopped to talk to some girls (likely the case) or screwed up on purpose to avoid having to do it again, but his excuse of "Maybe the rest were in the bathroom" didn't quite cut it. From that point on we had the "Biff factor" which meant your count was accurate. …plus or minus 100. I still occasionally use the term whenever numbers don't add up. I've never had a nickname. I don't know why; I guess I don't have a colourful enough personality to warrant one. Tom did on the occasion call me Lance-a-little, instead of Lance-a-lot, but that's not for any reason women reading this might be giggling about now.

That's it for this week. Part 2 is the actual

story but the cast of characters is at least now set. Till next week.

Lance Storm

“Malarkeys: Part 2”

December 15, 2002

Here is the much anticipated conclusion to my “Malarkey’s commentary from 2 weeks ago. We always had a lot of fun at Malarkey’s, and fights were few and seldom serious. One of the best fights happened our first night back from Japan, the first night we worked with Scotty. The best part about the fight was it didn’t involve any of the customers, and it took place in the parking lot after we were closed. Tom was off that night and Bill, the manager from the hotel that owned the bar, was running the show. After we closed up Chris and I were driving out of the parking lot and we noticed a guy getting beat up in the

vestibule of the hotel. I realized that the guy getting beat up was Bill so Chris stopped the car and I jumped out first. I pulled the guy off Bill and threw him out the door into the parking lot. Chris was out of the car by this point and to add a little insult to injury picked the guy up and pitched him into a line of shrubs that divided the parking lot.

Bill seemed fine and thanked us for bailing him out. Then out of nowhere Tony came barreling through and started beating the hell out of the guy Jericho had thrown in the bushes. He picked him up and threw him back in the bushes a few times and then started pounding the hell out of him. Tony had completely lost it at this point and was just raging on this poor guy. Chris never had a big tolerance for Tony to begin with and realized he was going to kill this guy, so Chris tackled Tony and knocked him clear, screaming "Tony that's enough!" Tony had that big musclehead ego so he didn't like

being knocked down, besides he was in full rage at this point and turned on Chris. Chris, not being one to ever back down from a fight, charged at Tony. Tony either ducked or slipped and Chris went flying by him like he just missed a high crossbody block. Keep in mind, it's the middle of winter, the parking lot is covered in ice, and both Tony and Chris are wearing cowboy boots. They get a hold of each other and go at it. Thankfully Bill got Scotty, who was still inside, to help me break up the fight between Chris and Tony. Scott yells, "I'll get Chris," leaving me to deal with a raging Ponticorvo. Tony liked me, so I was the least likely for Tony to take a swing at so there was some logic in Scotty opting for less crazy of the two combatants. Chris calmed down pretty quick and I eventually managed to hook Tony and hold him down. After a few choice words Tony finally calmed down and left, and the rest of us headed to Denny's for

the start of our post shift ritual. Denny's is of course a terrible place to eat. It's actually Jerry Lynn's bane of existence, but at 3:00 am, it not like we had a lot of options. There was a Denny's just up McLeod Trail and we would always head there after work to compare stories and wind down.

We recounted many strange and amusing nights at the bar, while eating at Denny's. One of my favourites was the night Scotty had 5 different girlfriends stop by the bar at the same time. Scotty always managed to juggle a very active social life and his juggling got very complicated on this particular night. Thankfully, we were packed to the rafters, which kept Scotty moving and provided a lot of places to hide. The hard part was that all of the waitresses hated that he screwed around so much, so they spent the whole night trying to herd all of his girlfriends to the same spot, in hopes that one of them would catch him with the

other. We were coworkers, so blatantly ratting him out was unacceptable, but the waitresses did everything they could to make sure he got caught in the act. This made our job even tougher as we had to run interference for him, while still maintaining order in the bar. It became a huge battle of us against them, with a ton of close calls, but Scotty managed to survive the night with all 5 relationships still intact. Scotty lives a rather charmed life!

Probably the greatest night in Malarkey's history was its last. It was actually its second to last night, but we all remember it as the last night because it was the one to remember. We dubbed it "The night the roof caved in!" The bar wasn't actually closing; they were shutting it down for renovations and changing the name. Thursday, Friday and Saturday were our only busy nights and on our last weekend everyone was taking things a bit slack.

Thursday night was a tradition and a night we had a lot of regulars. We played older, heavier rock music and the majority of our clientele on these nights were affectionately referred to as “Hair Bags”. You know the type - long hair, baseball caps, ripped jeans, etc. For our last “Hair bag Thursday”, Tom let a few of the more regular regulars dance on top of the bar after last call. Well the following night, “The night the roof caved in”, one of the regulars who missed out the night before decided he was going to take his turn atop the bar. At this point, I had been called by the manager of the hotel to deal with an incident in the hotel parking lot. When I got to the parking lot, I found a drunk, who I had thrown out of the bar minutes earlier, beating the hell out of a cab driver. When I pulled the guy off, the cabby said he wanted to press assault charges. I said I would hold the guy while the manger went inside to call the police. The guy took a

swing at me and tried to get away. I was always very careful never to hit anyone at work so I hooked the guy and took him to the ground to pin him till the cops arrived. He was extremely drunk and not very big so it wasn't hard. I took this opportunity to practice a few "sugars" (shoot holds) and submissions on the guy, while waiting for the police. Chris had quit working at the bar by this point, but often stopped by to drink and hang out with the boys. As I was rolling this guy into a Bob Backlund esque cross face chicken wing, Chris came barreling out the back door. "You better get in there... all hell just broke loose! If any of the boys get into trouble... I saw everything, if anyone else asks... I was never here!" That was all he said before he took off. I figured backing the boys was more important than stretching this idiot till the cops arrived, so I let the guy go and ran inside.

I got inside and all the lights were on

and the room was filled with a cloud of dust and half the ceiling has collapsed on top of the bar. There were fights and chaos everywhere. Once the police and paramedics showed up, we settled the place down. I found out that our moron regular, while atop the bar, decided to do chin ups from the beams above the bar. After managing to heave his fat carcass off the bar a couple of times, the beam gave way and collapsed, bringing most of the ceiling down over the bar. To make matters worse, one beam hit a guy's girlfriend on the way down. She wasn't badly hurt, but her drunken boyfriend, who I believe was out on parole, threw his beer bottle across the bar at some innocent guy who he in his drunken wisdom decided to blame for the accident. He missed the guy, but the bottle shattered against the back wall and the guy took a large piece of glass in the eye. We ended up filling out police reports till almost 5 am. The one guy

ended up permanently blinded his one eye, and the guy who threw the bottle I'm pretty sure ended up back in jail. After a night like that we figured for sure that was our last night. There was no way they could get the bar cleaned up in time, or would want to bother, just to run one last night. We were wrong. We opened the next night, but if you ask anyone who worked at Malarkey's they'll all say the last night was "the night the roof caved in!"

Till next week,
Lance Storm

RAW 10th Anniversary

There are a few references in this next piece that might need a little explaining. I mention "The World" in New York, which is the former WWF New York, their wrestling themed restaurant in New York's Time Square. The restaurant was pretty cool, but a very ill-fated business endeavour, that has since closed down. In an attempt to drive business they frequently ran events at the restaurant and hosting the 10th Anniversary of RAW was such an event.

During my career I did three appearances at the restaurant, including a skit where I mopped the floors of the restaurant as part of my, getting fired during the Invasion angle. Unfortunately a lot of

new merchandise came out at that time and the toy companies didn't know being a janitor was not a permanent gimmick so there is actually a fair bit of Lance Storm janitor themed merchandise out there.

RAW
UNCHAINED
LANCE STORM
LANCE STORM 5TH SURVIVAL SET

The Lance Storm “Survival Kit” with mop and bucket

"RAW: 10"

January 14, 2003

I'm writing this Tuesday night and I just got back from "The World" and the 10th Anniversary of RAW. What a great show. I had already written a commentary for this week, but I wasn't really all that happy with it and tonight's show was more than worth commenting on. I figured I could take the time and give you my thoughts on the RAW anniversary show this week instead. It's odd; initially I didn't even want to go to the show. That sounds bad but it was on a Tuesday, which is one of my few days off. I see my family so seldom lately that I dread any appearance that keeps me away from home. January was going to be a bad month

for me as it was with an overseas trip (Korea and Japan), so I wasn't keen to lose another day. I didn't figure I was a very big part of the last 10 years of RAW so I didn't really expect to even be asked to attend. Obviously I was asked to go, which I took as both good and bad news. It was good news in that the company thought I was an important enough part of the show to require my presence (a really good feeling) yet bad news in that I would lose my day off after all (never news I enjoy breaking to my wife and kids).

Now that I've been to the show I couldn't be happier that I went. I truly had a great time and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. It was a 2 hour show but we spent the better part of 10 hours there in total. We did a dry run through of the show during the day so we all had to be at The World early. Again this ended up being both good and bad news. Bad news in that I got very little sleep

the night before (I didn't get in from TV till nearly 4am) but good news in that I had a chance to sit around and chat with the boys. As much time as we spend together on the road, we seldom have time to just sit down and talk. There is never a shortage of great stories in a room full of the boys and the hours just shot by telling road stories. One of the highlights was listening to Howard Finkel's story of how he came to work for WWE. Howard has been here longer than any of us and has seen it all. As for the show itself, I was struck by many things, the foremost being how much of a mark I still am for this business. I had the time of my life just sitting there watching the show and had goose bumps during several of the videos. WWE video packages are, in my opinion, what set WWE apart from all other wrestling companies. So many great things have happened in this industry over the last ten years and the retrospectives brought back so

many great memories.

I was thrilled with Bret Hart's inclusion in the show. The response he received from the crowd was amazing and just seeing him on screen again reminded me how much I enjoyed his work. I don't know if it will ever be possible but I would love to see Bret in a WWE ring and on RAW one more time. Judging from the crowd's response, I'm not alone. Montreal aside and no disrespect intended to the memory of Owen, I feel both Bret and the fans deserve one last appearance. In many people's eyes, mine included, Bret will always be "The best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be." With the way his career ended Bret never had the chance to say goodbye and the fans never had the chance to say thanks. I don't know if we ever will, but I hope so. The memorial pieces were classy. It was sad looking back, but overlooking them would be so wrong. Seeing the faces of people we

have lost is never easy but on some level it feels good to remember. Owen's was the hardest for me, as it likely was for so many. Despite not really knowing him, I found myself fighting back the tears. Those in attendance who knew him well had tears running down their faces. It's touching to know he is so well remembered, yet heartbreaking to know that it has to be just memories. I was going to hit a few other points but I just can't bring myself to. I'm going to end this week with Owen, and our memories of him. He was one of the good guys and should be remembered not just on days like this, but always.

Lance

Having a few pre-match words with Howard Finkel.
Apparently this event did not draw well.

Back to Asia

Quite possibly the best international trip I did with WWE was to Korea and Japan and in this next commentary I share my thoughts on this tremendous trip. I've always loved working in Japan and this was my first trip back after leaving WAR in 1998. It was also the last Japan trip of my career, at least as I write this. I didn't think of it at the time but looking back now it was a bigger deal than I realized at the time. I've got 2 of the 3 matches on DVD thanks the camcorder I got for Christmas the year before. Unfortunately I couldn't find anyone to run the camera the final night so I missed the chance to have a copy of my final match in Japan. In an interesting footnote the person I convince to record the Korea match was

none other than Stephanie McMahon herself. It's a great match and I can't thank her enough for being willing to shoot the match for me.

"Korea & Japan"

February 3, 2003

I'm really pressed for time this week, so this may be short. After burying our last International trip to India so badly I thought it only fair to comment on our most recent trip to South Korea and Japan, because it was awesome. After Raw 2 weeks ago in Providence, RI, we flew to Seoul, South Korea for 1 show then to Tokyo, Japan for two. Travel was of course brutal, but when you do TV live every Monday you have to go halfway around the world, work 3 shows, and get back in less than 6 days. There really isn't a good way to do it; travel is going to be rough. It was the first time the company or I have ever been to Korea and it was an

amazing experience. I didn't get to see much of the country but I consider getting to add any country to my list of places I've been a good thing. From the little I saw of Seoul, it very much reminded me of Japan. There were several differences but the general feel of the country was the same. Our hotel was excellent and the show itself was OFF THE CHARTS.

The Korea crowd was the hottest, loudest crowd I've ever seen, heard, or worked in front of. The opening match tie up was getting the kind of POP and crowd response Hogan and Rock got in Sky Dome at WrestleMania 18. It was unbelievable. The building was a tight steep building so all of the people were in close to the ring. There were about 14,000 people and they were so loud. They had never been to a live WWE show before and man were they excited about it. It was one of those shows you could do no wrong in; they popped for everything.

William and I defended the Tag Titles against Booker T and Goldust, and the crowd loved it. They did not react well to the "belt shot" finish, but perhaps they didn't really understand it. Finishes like that don't work well in Japan either. On an interesting note, I had my first KO in this match. We've talked here many times about my reputation as a very light and safe worker, well all of that went out the window in this match as I knocked Goldust out cold with a back elbow. It's an elbow I've thrown a million times but on this night it unfortunately hit its mark. I caught Goldie right on the jaw with it and he dropped like a stone. Good thing Booker was paying attention because I didn't realize I knocked him out and I covered him for the pin. If Booker didn't make the save, it would have been the end of the match because Goldie wasn't moving. Fortunately he recovered pretty quickly and we finished the match without a problem.

The Japan shows were just as good. The crowds weren't quite as lively, but they were about the same size and sold out to the rafters, like Korea was. I hadn't been to Japan in 5 years so it was cool to finally go back. Many fans remembered me from my WAR days, so there was a real homecoming feel to the trip. We worked Hurricane and Spike the first night and the Dudleys the second. Both matches were fun and the crowd loved what we did. I've always loved the Japanese crowds; they treat wrestling differently and I always feel more respected in Japan. The interesting note from the last Japan show was that I broke my nose for the first time. It was right at the beginning of the Dudleys' comeback so I had to do the whole finish of the match with a broken nose. Fortunately it was from a straight on hit so it wasn't displaced; it could have been much worse. My nose is still a bit tender but at least I didn't have to go to the hospital to

have it set and straightened. Looking back it doesn't sound like that great of a trip: I broke my nose, I knocked a guy out, and extremely long brutal travel, but those three shows were so amazing it was more than worth it. I wouldn't give that trip up for anything.

Till next week,
Lance

Holding Spike Dudley in a vertical suplex in Japan
I held him here for 45 seconds

My last match in Japan a successful World Tag Team Title Defence.

Little Jimmy

This next story has nothing to do with R Truth or Little Jimmy but it does have a major Jimmy tie-in. If you visited my site back in the day you will no doubt remember this particular tale because it was one of my favourites and one I got a lot of positive fan reaction from. It's about the WWE Security force and the inexplicable fact that back when I was in WWE they were all named Jimmy. Unfortunately the last WWE show I went to they had a completely different security team and none of them were named Jimmy.

"Jimmy Security"

March 18, 2003

Last week a few of the boys and I were sitting in a Denny's restaurant. I say sitting rather than eating because making the claim that we were eating would lead you to believe we were actually receiving our food. The Denny's in question was in Cleveland, Ohio and we were there the better part of an hour and a half before we received all of the food we ordered. During this hour and a half we talked and joked about several things, not the least of which was WWE's crack security force, which has been affectionately labeled "Jimmy Security." We call it "Jimmy Security" because for some, completely unexplained

reason almost all of the WWE security guys are named Jimmy. I'm not sure where it all started or for that matter where it is all going but since I've been with WWE all of the security guys are named Jimmy. This is to say the least a little confusing. We never know whom exactly we are talking about when we say things like, "Hey, can you go get Jimmy the security guy to escort Rock to his meet and greet?" Needless to say this created a lot of confusion and we needed a way to straighten it all out.

Now I know what you are thinking. "Hey all of these guys have last names. Would it kill you to learn their last names?" The answer to that question is, "Yes it probably would." Keep in mind that we get hit in the head for a living and a large majority of us weren't all that bright to begin with. There is a reason we have people named Test, Edge, and Jazz. That's all the name we can handle. Hell, if guys have

names more complicated than that we abbreviate (RVD, Y2J). There is no way in hell we have the brain capacity to remember the last name of a half dozen security guys, no matter how much we may like or dislike them. So in an attempt to keep all our Jimmy's straight, we've given them all nicknames. Here is a list of "Jimmy Security" nicknames. Keep in mind that some Jimmy's have more than one nickname as some of us see them in different lights. Regardless of how invented, the nicknames all are completely distinguishable and there is no longer any "Jimmy confusion."

Jimmy "Tan" – Has a permanent orange fake looking tan

Jimmy "Floods" – His pants tend to be a tad short

Jimmy "Useless" – Self-explanatory

Jimmy "First Class" – Has heat for upgrading flights, when the boys are sitting

in coach

Jimmy "Gas" – Very thick and well muscled

"Stone Cold" Jimmy – Bald with a Goatee

Jimmy "Random" – For some reason always the guy selected by airport security

Jimmy "K" – Real name actually Kerry (I don't know how he even got hired)

Jimmy "Lightfoot" – A little too pretty and delicate

"Sanford and Son" Jimmy – If you saw him you'd know

"Ponytail" Jimmy – Self explanatory

"WWF New York" Jimmy or "The World" Jimmy – I guess now he's "Unemployed" Jimmy

That last one was a little stiff. What can I say? I'm a heel at heart.

Till next week,

Lance Storm

That Damn Amy

This is another one of my all-time favourites and one fans to this day still comment on. I think one of the reasons it's still remembered is that I did repost in on my site not that long ago, so it isn't as distant a memory as some of my other work. I think this is also the commentary that led my friend Marcus Wynne to suggest I pull all of my old commentaries out and compose an eBook collection. So if you are enjoying yourself so far, you have both Marcus Wynne and this following story to thank.

"Heels at Heart"

March 25, 2003

As most of you should know by now, I travel with Christian every week. We have, like most travel partners do, become like an old married couple. We bitch and complain about each other to no end. I bug him about being an inconsiderate, ugly bastard who can't work, and with the exception of the "can't work" part that's pretty much accurate. He on the other hand complains, with about the same level of accuracy, that I'm a boring, ugly bastard who can't work. On a few occasions we actually agree and see eye to eye. Last weekend was one of those instances. I think the problem lies in the fact that we are both heels at heart.

When we are alone we have no one to heel on but each other. When there is someone else to aim our verbal venom at we jump on the chance to team up and be vicious heels. Last week whilst driving from St. Louis to Columbia, MO we had such an opportunity. Christian was driving and as we approached a minivan he looked at me and said, "How do you think they feel about Amy?" I looked up and saw that the people in question had "WE LOVE AMY" painted on the back of their van in large bold letters. There was a big pink heart, the whole nine yards. I looked at Christian and replied, "I'll go out on a limb here and say they're pretty fond of her." We chuckled to ourselves about the absurdity of painting such a message on your vehicle, when Christian has the brainstorm, "I wish we had a "WE HATE AMY" sign we could hold up."

Now that Christian had put the ball in play, I grabbed it and headed for the end

zone. I had just pulled my booking sheet out to check for the name of the building in Columbia so I said to Christian, “I’ve got my booking sheet and a Sharpie marker. Let’s make the sign.” I grabbed my booking sheet, flipped it over and pulled out the sharpie. I wrote “WE HATE AMY!!” in large bold letters and told Christian to pull up beside them. Neither of us had a clue who Amy was but if they saw fit to boast their affection, we could not in good conscience as heels pass up this opportunity to voice a contrary opinion. Just as we were pulling up on them, Christian hit the brakes and looked at me. “What?” I asked him. “What if Amy is a local sick kid?” he asked. Damn, even as heels we didn’t want to heel on a sick kid, especially if these people were her parents and she was in ICU somewhere. At this point I noticed there was some writing on the side of the van as well. I told Christian to pull up a bit, maybe there would be

something on the side, like "Go for the Gold" or something, which would give us a clue as to who Amy was. If she was a local athlete, the gloves were off. Christian pulled alongside and I read, "Nashville Stars…vote for Amy." There was no way she's a sick kid. Christian then remembered that he flipped by "Nashville Stars" on TV last week. He told me that it's a Nashville Country Music show like "American Idol." At this point we both got a diabolical smile and Christian hit the gas as I put our sign up against my window. We held steady beside the van waiting for its two occupants to notice our sign. Finally the passenger turned our way and started frantically pointing our sign out to the driver. Christian hit the gas and pulled ahead as we both triumphantly laughed at our public display of hatred for a person we didn't even know. It's amazing the lengths you'll go to on the road to amuse yourselves.

Till next week, don't vote for Amy. I want her doing a bigger job than Christian on "I -HEAT"!

Lance Storm

Mania XIX

The tone of this next piece is a way more positive than it really should have been. As I mentioned after the India commentary, I missed out on my official WrestleMania match at this show, getting my World tag team title match bumped off the main card to the live pre-show. What I didn't mention is that the match on the show that we got bumped off the show to accommodate was a pillow fight match between the "Miller Light Cat Fight Girls" and Torrie and Stacy. I guess at the time Miller Light was doing an ad campaign that had these two hot chicks that would end up in a cat fight. WWE booked these two girls on the show and they had countless back stage segments that were terrible and then

finally the pillow fight segment which was also horrible. Getting bumped off the main Mania card for this match really sucked and to make it worse it also involved a huge cut in pay. So while I did have a great trip with my family, I was not entirely in as good a mood as this next commentary might indicate.

"WrestleMania, etc."

April 7, 2003

I've got several things I want to cover this week, but I figure I should start with my thoughts on WrestleMania. I spent almost a whole week in Seattle and was fortunate enough to have my entire family there with me. Seattle isn't too far from home and with a conveniently timed spring break, my wife and daughters were free to join me. This was for all intents and purposes the first family vacation we've ever taken. We arrived in Seattle Wednesday afternoon and with the exception of one Fan Axxess appearance Friday night (9:30 till 11:00) I was free till Sunday. Seattle is a great city with a lot of stuff to do and see. We stayed right

downtown and for the most part walked to everything. Seattle is a very clean, pretty city, and we had a ball. We went to the Pike Place Market, which would have been better without the kids but still worth seeing. Seattle has a good aquarium and a very interesting underground tour. We partook in both although I wouldn't recommend the underground tour for kids. It's more informative and interesting than it is exciting and entertaining. If you do have kids take them to the children's Museum. It's interactive and great for kids. My two girls played for hours and said it was the highlight of their trip. We also visited the space needle, which was cool. It's pales in comparison to the CN Tower, but it was still worth the trip and rates nearer the view of the Calgary tower. There was a ton of other stuff worth seeing but with two kids we had to limit ourselves. There were a lot of antique shops, which would have been fun

to check out but most of them aren't designed to withstand a three year old. There is also a ton of coffee shops and bookstores in Seattle. Seattle is of course the birthplace of Starbucks so you couldn't walk more than 2 blocks without passing at least one or two of them. I've got a huge backlog of books to get to so I found the will power to stay out of the bookshops.

As for WrestleMania itself, I didn't really get to see too much of it. After my match I hit the showers and headed up to the press box where my family was seated for the event. I tried to watch as much of the show as I could but my kids weren't into watching the matches much so I was busy keeping them out of trouble and entertained. The pyro and music was way too loud for them so on the whole they didn't enjoy themselves much. I do have a few comments from what I did see. I was very impressed with the girls' match (the

title match not the pillow fight atrocity). They have brought their work up to the point where they are no longer a gimmick "girls' match," they are a match I now look upon and judge the same as I do all others. The improvements over the last year or so are unbelievable. I loved and respect the fact that both Kurt and Austin did big clean jobs in their match. So often it takes run-ins, interference, DQs, and a load of other crap for people to get beat these days. Here we had two top shelf guys getting beat right in the middle. Kudos for Austin, as likely our biggest baby face, to do it; and considering Kurt's neck injury he went so far above and beyond it is without compare. I've got nothing but respect and admiration for these guys. Vince's blood soaked face peeking up over the ring apron was the camera shot of the night. We will see that shot in video packages for years to come. I want to sit down and watch all of Jericho and Michaels

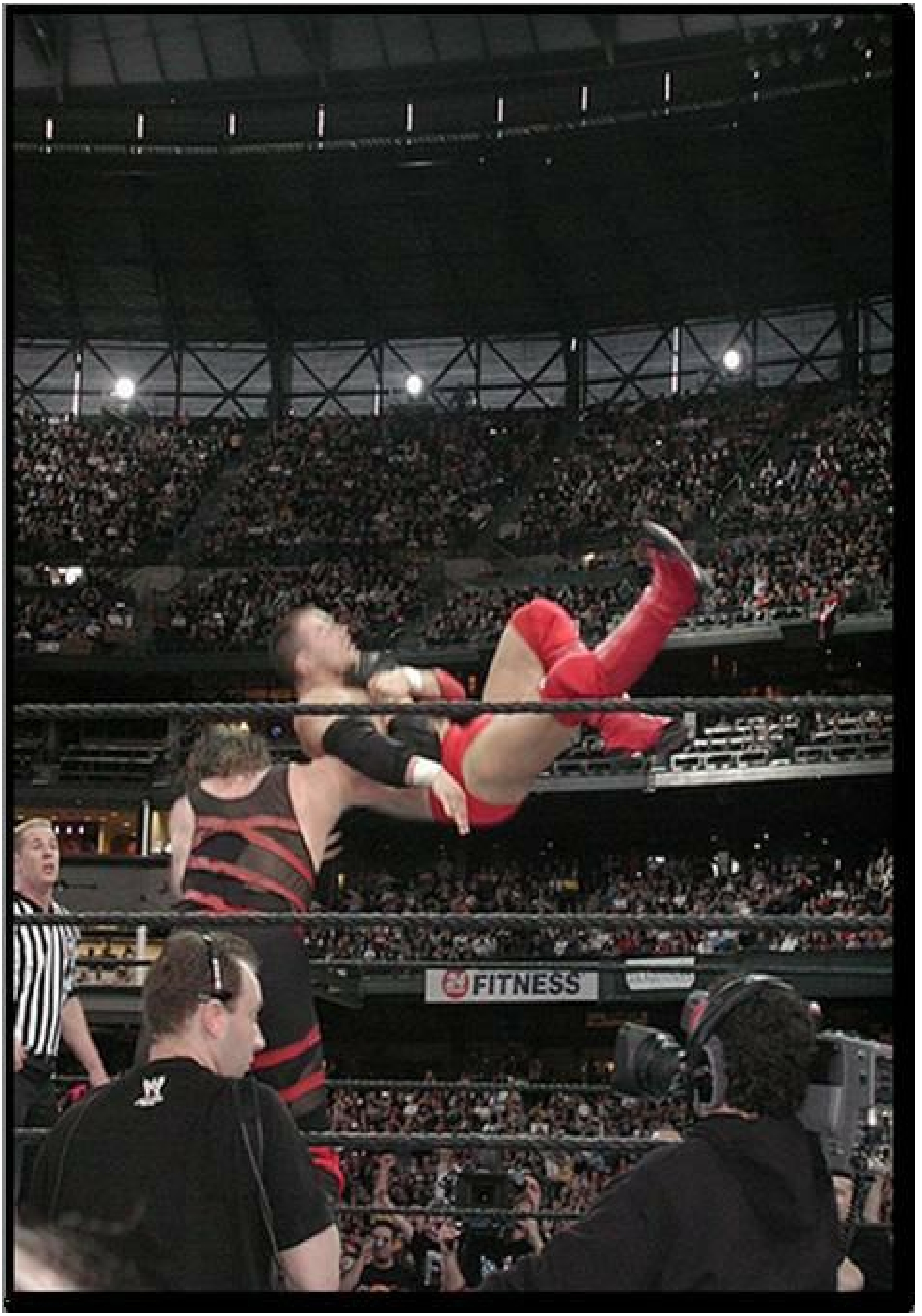
as soon as possible. With the bits I saw it looks like it could have been the show stealer. I also liked the drama created by the heavy selling in the HHH-Booker T match. Realism and desperation like that made this match mean so much more to me. It may not come across as well on tape but stuff like that creates great emotion live.

I want to thank everyone who brought signs to the show. There were a ton of Canadian flags (I know they weren't all for me, but still), Stormtrooper, Storm 108, and even a "We hate Amy" sign were in the house. You've got to love fans and the interactive nature of the Internet. Thanks to you all! I also need to thank everyone for their Birthday wishes (I turned 34 on the 3rd). I received e-mails, cards, and presents, and I am grateful to all of you.

Till next week,
Lance

AMGEN
Premera Blue Cross

One half of the World Tag Team Champions on the pre-show of WrestleMania XIX


FITNESS

Getting choke slammed by Kane on the pre-show of WrestleMania XIX

Tooting my own Horn

This next story is a bit uncharacteristic. It's not really a road story as much as it is a personal reflection on my life and career. It may seem like I am just patting myself on the back, but that was not the intent. The sentiment in the piece is genuine.

"The Feeling of Success"

May 5, 2003

I had a very unique experience this past weekend, before a house show in Kitchener, Ontario. This unique experience was the feeling of success. It's weird I've never really experienced that feeling before. The feeling of "yes I'm successful; I have succeeded and amounted to something." Now this may sound odd because obviously I've been successful several times in my life and have certainly achieved a great level of success in my career but the thing is I've never really noticed it before. You see the problem (not that it's actually a problem but I don't know what else to call it) is that I've always been successful and I've never really

failed at anything before, so I've just never noticed. I've always been one to set my mind to something and just move forward. So if success has been the norm, what was different this past weekend to make me notice it? To go any further you'll need a little bit of background information.

I went to University in Waterloo, Ontario. Kitchener and Waterloo are, for all intents and purposes, the same city. Most people call it K/W or Kitchener/Waterloo as if it is just one city. K/W is a very important city in my life, as it is the city where I made the biggest decision of my life. Growing up I was pretty much your model kid. I was a good athlete, a great student, well behaved, and I never got into trouble. I went through high school with great grades and got accepted to all three Universities to which I applied. I was on my way to becoming a charter accountant (a very respectable profession). My parents were very happy.

Somewhere during my second year of University in K/W I split from the norm, packed it all in, and decided to get into wrestling. My parents were now a lot less happy. I left K/W, packed up a duffle bag and headed to Calgary…Alberta, Canada. I had nothing; I had no ins or contacts in the business, just a duffle bag full of clothes, and several thousand dollars worth of student loan debt to pay back. I was hanging on the bottom rung of the ladder for the first time in my life.

Well this past weekend (14 years later) I had the chance to drive down King Street E. in K/W and drive by my old University. I am now married to a woman I couldn't love more, I've got 2 fantastic kids, I own a nice home (which is almost paid for), two cars (which are paid for) and I'm well on my way to retiring by the time I'm 40. It was a great feeling to drive down King, some 14 years after making the biggest decision of my life

knowing I'd made the right one. That feeling can only be described as "The Feeling of Success." It was pretty cool.

Till next week,
Lance

Chief Morley & I vs. Kane & Rob Van

Dam
Kitchener WWE Live Event

Thank You Ric

Everyone has likely seen and remembers the in ring farewell to Ric Flair on RAW the night after his retirement match at WrestleMania. Several years earlier Ric received a similar send off which not as many people know about. This post-match tribute ended up on WWE's "Ultimate Ric Flair Collection" DVD. After a great match with HHH in Greensborough a spontaneous in ring celebration took place and I was there firsthand to share in it. What follows are my thoughts right after the event.

"Something Special"

May 20, 2003

I was a part of something very special this week. No I'm not talking about my 1:08 breaking Battle Royal appearance, or for that matter my 1:08 shattering match with Bill Goldberg Monday night. I'm talking about something that had very little to do with me. Monday night at RAW, after the cameras went off, the locker room cleared and hit the ring. This was not part of some post match run-in, this was a sign of respect and appreciation for one of the greatest, if not the greatest performer in our industry. We hit the ring to give Ric Flair a standing ovation. I've talked about how much of a mark I am for Ric Flair, both as a worker and

a person. Well I am not alone when it comes to being a big fan of "The Nature Boy." The crowd needed little encouragement so as the ring filled up with his peers, the entire arena in Greenville, SC was on their feet as a sign of respect for the man who has "bled, sweat, and paid the price" more times than any of us can remember. He's given us countless mat classics, some of the greatest matches in wrestling history. If you've ever had the good fortune of buying a ticket to see Ric Flair "walk that aisle" you know what I'm talking about. For over 20 years he's been a "limousine riding, jet flying, wheeling-dealing, kiss stealing, son of a gun" who has always delivered. Monday night on RAW was no exception.

Ric gave an emotional promo that gave me goose bumps. When Ric told Hunter that he'd been in a thousand matches like that, and never once said he couldn't wrestle, Ric Flair owned that arena. Ric bumped and

chopped his way into all of our hearts one more time. Giving him a standing ovation and the respect he deserves just seemed right. There were no more heels or baby faces; there was just an arena full of people who love Ric Flair and what he means to this industry. Everyone from Vince McMahon all the way down to the guys who wrestled the dark matches that night stood in the ring and toasted the Nature Boy. It was one of those emotional moments that you never know when, or if, they will happen again. Ric stood in the ring with tears in his eyes as the arena chanted for a speech. The ring cleared giving Ric center stage, and in true Ric Flair fashion he went on to put over everyone in the building but himself. He thanked the office for the opportunity, the boys for their respect, and every fan for being a part of his life for the past 20-some years. This is what being a wrestling fan is all about. It's about buying a ticket to see the

matches, and ending up being a part of history. It was moments like this and people like Ric Flair that make me glad I became a wrestler.

Thanks to you Ric, for everything you've meant to this business, and for renewing my love for wrestling.

Till next week,
Lance

"Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining"

June 2, 2003

I get asked many times if wrestling is still fun or if it has become a job just like any other. I usually say that it is both. There are times when this is the greatest job on Earth and times where it really tries your sanity. This weekend was both, a perfect example, if you will, of the aforementioned cloud and silver lining. The cloud of this job is of course the travel. I've gone on about the trials and tribulations of life on the road many times so I will spare you the details and just hit the key point. I HATE FLYING! It's not that I have a fear of flying; I just hate the airline industry and being at their mercy day after

day. This week it is more like day after day after day after… Check this out:

I left home on Saturday. It took me 2 flights to get to Portland, OR. Sunday I took 2 more flights to get to Albuquerque, NM. Monday it was 1 more flight to San Diego for RAW. Tuesday will be 2 flights home to Calgary. I'm home about 20 hours then it is 2 more flights on Wednesday to get me to Newark, NJ where I will catch our charter flight to England on Thursday. The charter flight stops once for fuel so it's really like 2 more flights to get me there. We arrive 3:30 Friday morning and work that night. Saturday morning we have another flight to get us to New Castle for the Insurrection PPV. We work Saturday night and fly back Sunday. Sunday is the "2 flight" refueling flight to Miami. We arrive Sunday afternoon and work RAW on Monday. Tuesday I then have my final 2 flights to get me home. All totaled that brings me to 16 flights in 11 days

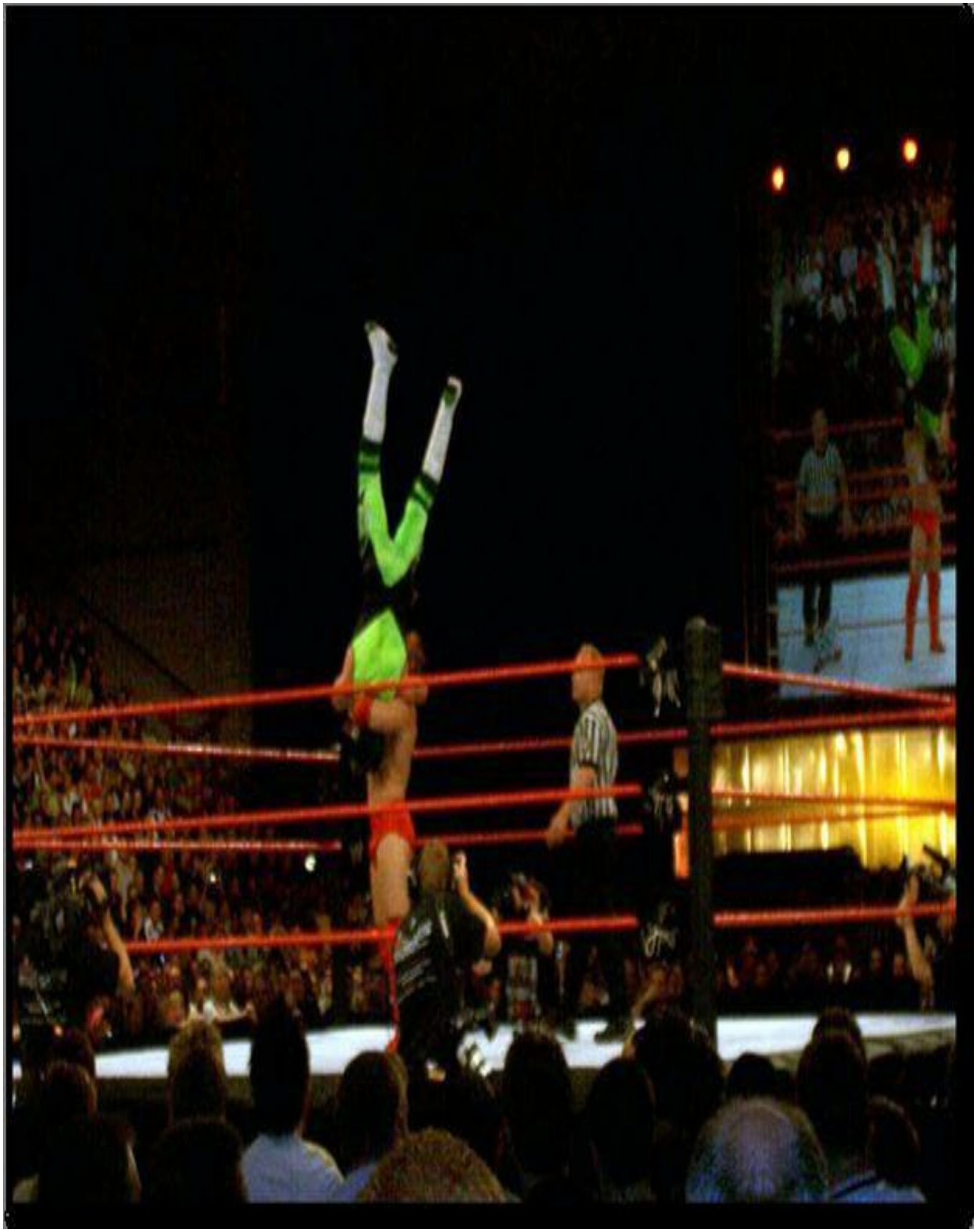
and next Monday is the only one of those days I will not be spending part of my day in the air. My sister in-law works as a flight attendant and she doesn't even fly that much. I'll be lucky to return home next week with even a grain of sanity. That's a pretty cloudy week, but thankfully there was that silver lining. Our show on Saturday was in Portland Oregon, and it was the first WWE show in Portland in 10-years. The state of Oregon has always had a very strict athletic commission whose strict policies made it unfavorable for us to run events there. Those policies have changed and this past Saturday was an incredible show. With such a long absence the people of Portland were starved for WWE Entertainment and showed up in droves. We had just over 15,000 people in the Rose Garden Arena Saturday night and man did that make for a hot crowd.

A huge hot crowd is what we all live for. All the travel, the aches and pain don't

seem to matter much when you step through that curtain to 15,000 screaming fans. Matches are easier, bumps don't hurt as much and it's what makes doing this job the greatest job on Earth. The only hard part of the night was trying to keep our match short enough. When you work in front of a crowd like that it's so tempting to have a long match. You're having fun and the crowd is into everything so you don't want your match to end. Everyone wants to wrestle a 30-minute match. We had 9 matches that night so it shouldn't take a mathematical genius to realize that if we all wrestled for 30 minutes you would have ended up with one hell of a long show (About 5 hours with intermission). I don't care how big of a wrestling fan you are, no one wants to watch a 5 hour card. This leaves some of us having to try and keep our match under 10bminutes. I was in one of those matches and I'm proud to say we were likely the only

match to pull it off. We ended up with a 3 ½ hour show, which in my opinion is too long but what can you do? We love doing our job. With any luck last Saturday won't be the only silver lining of this far too cloudy week. If I can find one more, I might just make it home, not too much the worse for wear.

Here's to finding your own silver linings,
Lance



Suplexing the Hurricane in the dark match of the Insurrection PPV

I do, but sometimes I wish I didn't

In 2003 my Mom got remarried, and I managed to book the weekend off to attend the ceremony. In the article I simply refer to it as a family wedding, but it was in fact my Mom's wedding. What follows is my account of the weekend and my reflections on the pluses and minuses of being famous. I also refer to a "good friend" in the article who was in fact Janet Evanovich. I'm not sure why I didn't refer to her by name in the piece; perhaps in the spirit of a piece on fame I thought it better to avoid name dropping.

On a side note, booking off for this weekend also cost me my chance to wrestle in Prince Edward Island. WWE seldom runs the tiny

province, and the only time they ran it when I was in WWE was the weekend I booked off for the wedding. PEI is the only Canadian province I've never wrestled in.

“Going Home Again”

July 13, 2003

This past week I took my first legitimate vacation in, I don’t know how long. I had a very important family wedding to go to so I booked the weekend off, packed up the whole family and headed back home. By home I mean where I grew up, not home where I currently live, although as seldom as I get there that too could be considered a vacation. This was the first time I’d been home in almost 6 years, so it was very strange. It was strange because it has been so long and strange because people now look at me differently. With it being nearly 6 years since I’d been home, it marked the first time that I’ve been home since I achieved any

level of “fame” in North America. This may not seem like much, and truthfully I never even thought about it ahead of time, but it changes a lot of things. For a large part of my vacation I wasn’t Lance Evers, back home to visit family. I was Lance Storm, returning local celebrity, or as it felt to me at times, Lance Storm, sideshow attraction.

“Fame” is an interesting thing. It’s something most people think they want, and granted a cool thing the first time you experience it. However, once you have it, it changes the way everyone sees you. I think everyone who has “it” wishes they could turn it off, or get rid of it completely. A good friend of mine once said, “I always wanted to be rich and famous. Now I realize I just want to be rich.” These are very smart words. Both money and fame can change your life but how money changes your life is predominantly up to you while with fame it’s predominantly out of your control.

Please don't get me wrong here, this commentary is not meant to be read as a complaint, but rather an observation. In Calgary my "fame" (that sounds conceited but I don't know how else to say it) only affects me when I step out of my regular routine, which isn't all that often. I am very much a creature of habit and with the exception of the occasional trip to the theater or mall I don't have to deal with the general public. Moreover with my level of "fame" it's not like I'm getting mauled the second I step out my door. At home in North Bay my "fame" hit me far more than I expected it to and in a way I did not see coming.

Seeing old family and friends I haven't seen in years (6 years for some and in the case of wedding guests upwards of 20) was great but also very weird. People don't treat you the same and I got introduced differently than the rest of my family. It

seemed that everyone was trying to get their own little piece of "fame by association." Everyone who knew me way back when knows what I do now and of course have been telling all of their current friends and family that they know, or knew me. The wedding this past weekend was their chance to prove it and show others. Whether it be their kids or their spouses, introductions always seemed to have a "the wrestler" or "you know…LANCE" attached to it. I received phone calls from people I'm not sure would have even thought of calling if not for what I now do for a living. I was also inundated with autograph photo requests. Even if you aren't a wrestling fan I guarantee you know someone who is (especially kids) and this was everyone's chance to come through as the hero and produce a cool gift when they got home. I understand this and I certainly don't mind signing pictures but contrary to popular

belief I don't have an endless supply of promotional 8X10s to give out. Truth be told, I'm in a constant struggle to get promo photos from the office and I currently have 1 in my possession which I am keeping for myself. Fortunately my Mom scanned a full-page photo out of a RAW Magazine and printed several copies so I managed to fill most requests, even the one I received during the ceremony (I kid you not).

I even had the occasion to go out and hit a local bar. It was actually a bar I bounced at before I moved to Calgary to get into wrestling. The night started out fine but before too long I was the attraction of the club. It's crazy to watch how getting noticed spreads. I'm not a big enough celebrity to get instant recognition and more often than not it starts with someone saying, "Hey you look a lot like Lance Storm." No one expects to see famous people (especially in North Bay, ON.), so they usually take awhile to believe

it. Once one guy spots you it spreads worse than SARS. You can actually watch the wave spread through the club. One guy points you out to another, and then he tells two friends, and so on, and so on. Before too long word is everywhere that you are there and people start looking for you. Once that happens you are the entertainment for the evening and spend the rest of the night signing autographs. I even signed my first boob (By this I don't mean I signed some idiot in the bar, I actually signed a women's breast). It's not the first time I've been asked to sign a women's breast, just the first time I've obliged. It was a waitress from the bar and when I initially declined her offer (as I always do) I used the fact that my wife, who was standing right there, likely wouldn't approve. The waitress became very embarrassed and started apologizing to my wife. My wife rather enjoys embarrassing me, and making fun of my fame, so she

assures the woman that she doesn't mind at all and that I more than have her permission to sign her boob. This left me pretty much out of excuses, so I obliged and signed her breast. Thankfully with my wife present she didn't provide her entire breast for me to sign.

I guess the point of this commentary is that despite trying to keep the career of Lance Storm and the life of Lance Evers separate, it is really a futile effort. People don't seem to be able accept just Lance Evers anymore. The way I'm viewed by others will always be affected by my chosen profession. I guess I will have to remember that it is my CHOSEN profession and learn to live with it. Fortunately by the time my kids are old enough to be effected by this I should be retired and off television. I once thought it would be cool for my kids to have a famous Dad, but I'm realizing it's probably better if they don't.

Till next week,
Lance

EC-Naked-DUB

It's flashback time, for a tale from ECW. ECW was a great time in my career and I had a lot of fun while I was there. Most of that fun was with my good buddy Chris Candito who is sadly no longer with us. Chris was a great guy and we had so many great matches together. We both loved to work hard but we both also liked to have fun and on one particular crazy night in Baton Rouge we did both. I got a lot of great feedback when I first posted this next commentary so I trust you will enjoy it here.

"Naked in Baton Rouge"

July 29, 2003

After last week's request for questions I was reminded of a few funny stories from my ECW days that I thought would make for good commentaries. The following is a story I've told to the boys many times, and it was one of my more silly moments in the ring. We were doing a house show in Baton Rouge, LA. This was right after Dawn Marie's debut. She was still working as Tammy Lynn Bytch. We were just starting our initial program with Tammy Sytch and Chris Candito. It was our first loop through all of our regular towns after Tammy joined the company. Paul liked giving the fans everything on a show so

every night he would have us do the bit where Tammy would strip Dawn down to her bra and panties then I would grab Tammy and go to Suplex her. I would hold the standing suplex so Tammy's skirt would drop and everyone would get to see her thong too (or rather her ass). After that Chris would usually hit me in the back of the head with a chain and Tammy would roll me up in a small package for the pin (again showing her, shall we say, good side). Chris usually on his own, just to be silly, would then take his trunks off and parade around in his thong doing a great Jim Duggan like stomp around the ring.

On this particular night Tammy was off so Francine was subbing in. Shane Douglas was also there but not working due to an injury. With the Triple Threat tie in we decided to put him in our match as well. Now I don't remember who started it all but we kept getting sillier and sillier with ideas

on how to end the match and show off our asses. After all, Dawn was getting stripped damn near naked every night. It's only fair that she gets to see someone's ass too. We kept adding ideas on top of ideas to the point where I was literally rolling on the floor in hysterical laughter. The following was how the match concluded. Chris and I hit a big move for a near fall. Dawn rolled in to break the count. Francine rolled in and the catfight ensued. Francine stripped Dawn down to her bra and thong. I grabbed Francine and went to piledrive her. She was wearing shorts (it was the only outfit she brought) so the suplex spot wouldn't work. Before piledriving her I grabbed her shorts and hiked them up into what was most likely a rather uncomfortable wedgy. That's 2 out of 5 in the bare @$$ department. Before I could deliver the piledriver, Candito executed a roll up and when he got me rolled up he grabbed two hands full of tights

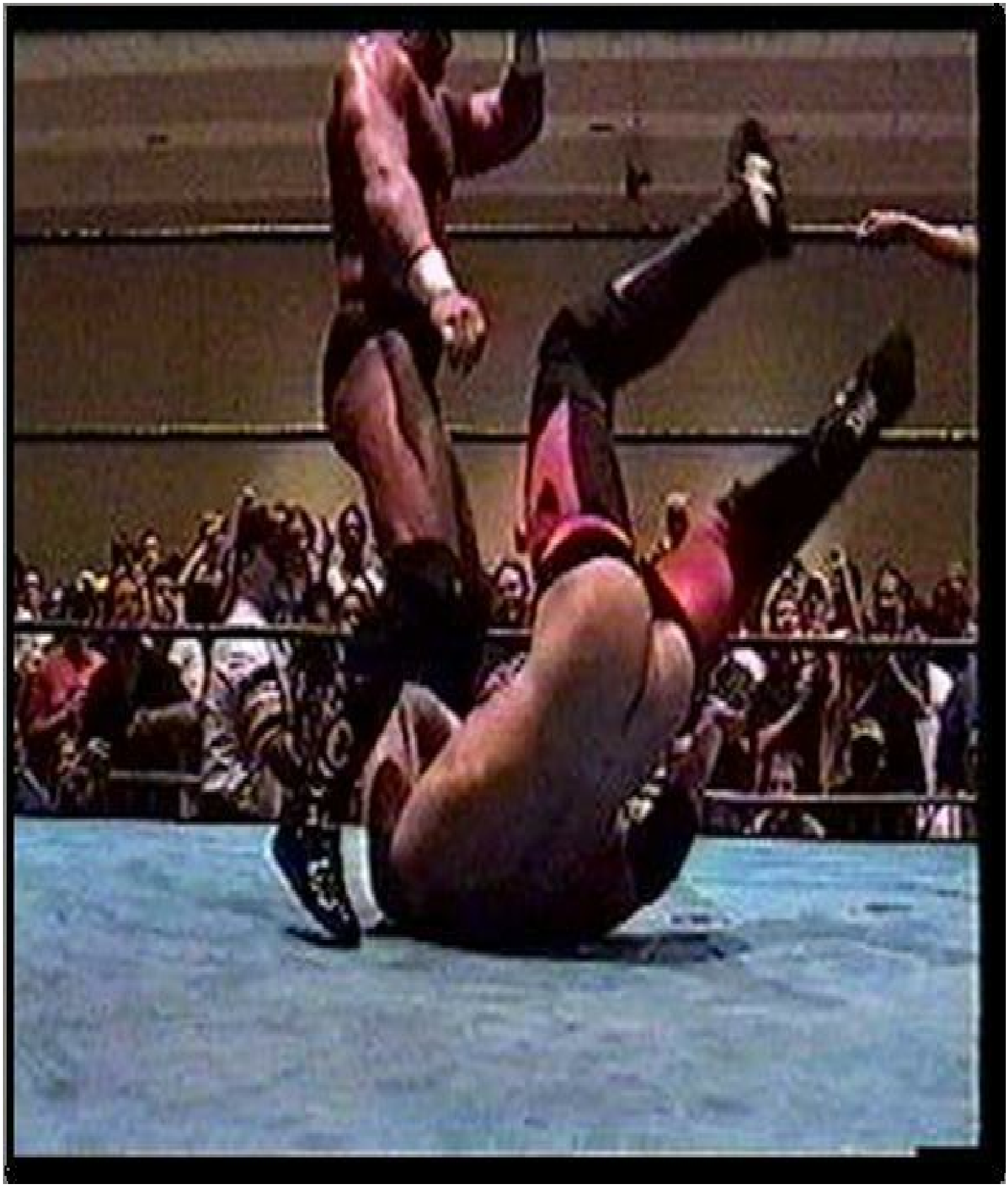
and pulled. There was now a FULL moon in Baton Rouge (3 out of 5). I swear if I wasn't folded up for the roll up my tights would have been around my knees.

The three members of the Triple Threat hit the ring to celebrate and Candito stripped down and did his Jim Duggan impression again in his thong (4 out of 5). From there Francine and Chris looked at Shane with a "How about you?" look. Shane obliged and took off his shorts and hiked his underwear up his butt to make due in place of a thong (5 out of 5). But we weren't done yet. Shane while celebrating his new look turned and Francine grabbed his under wear and pulled them off. Since this was a planned spot Shane very timely dropped his World Title belt lower than usual and covered his manhood. The crowd erupted in laughter as Candito then casually strolled past him and took the belt. Another planned spot and Shane very quickly removed the

hat off his head and once again hid his manhood. Shane was now standing in the ring wearing nothing but his boots and ball cap.

All the while Dawn and I were upset outside the ring having a fit because we lost and were humiliated: her in her bra and thong and me with my ass hanging out. Being the "dumb heel" I of course hadn't noticed that my pants were still down showing off my butt. If Dawn had to be out there half naked I didn't think it fair that I pulled my pants up immediately. After we all made it back to the locker room we had yet another round of laughter and that match will be forever known as the night we got naked in Baton Rouge.

Till next week, keep your pants on!
Lance



From the Naked in Baton Rouge match; I wasn't kidding he pulled my tights.

Probably more of me than you ever wanted to see, or maybe not.

A Crippling Crossface

You may think by the title this next story involves Chris Benoit but it does not. Truth be told I don't have many Benoit stories and even if I did I can't bring myself to tell them anymore. I get asked about him and the way he died and just have no interest in talking about it. Everyone wants answers and I just don't think there are any, and as much as people want to separate his career from the tragic end of his life I can't. With all that said this next story is actually an Edge story and there is a smaller story that I mention below but do not tell. I will share that story with you here but not until you've read the piece first. Before you do read it however you need a bit of context. I mention in the article that Edge is recouping from surgery, and the

surgery I'm referring to was his neck fusion surgery. In 2003 Edge was losing strength in his one arm and was diagnosed with 1 or 2 herniated discs in his neck and needed to have the discs fused in his neck. For the surgery they take a chunk of bone out of your hip and fuse it to the discs in your neck. It's a very invasive surgery and it keeps athletes out about 1 year. When they did the surgery I think they discovered that one of the discs wasn't just herniated but in fact ruptured and Edge was very fortunate to be able to come back as well as he did. I don't remember how long after the surgery our get together was but I think he had just gotten to the point where he no longer was required to wear the soft neck collar.

"A Great Week, eh!"

August 4, 2003

This past week has been a lot of fun for me. I'm typing this Sunday night so I can't comment on any events from TV in Vancouver, but thus far things have been fantastic. I was not booked on the RAW tour of Australia this week so I was home. I've been to Australia twice before so I wasn't all that upset about missing out on the 30-some hour round trip flight. Moreover, not going to Australia meant more time at home. Time at home is never a bad thing and this past week it was a great thing.

SmackDown was doing house shows in Calgary and Edmonton this weekend and my good buddy Edge was in town doing PR.

I haven't seen Edge since before his surgery (5 months at least) so it was great to see him again. He came over to my house Thursday and I treated him to a nice home cooked meal. When I say I treated him I mean I invited him. Truthfully it was my wife's cooking that made it a treat. If I were to attempt preparing a meal I would venture to guess our close friendship could come to an abrupt end. In addition to a great meal we had the chance to just relax and get caught up. For those of you who are curious how he's doing after the surgery, he looks great. He looks so good that it's hard to believe he was ever hurt, which oddly enough I did. There is a great story about a crossface here but I will leave that to him. Be sure to check out his next Edgucation commentary as he told me he is going to tell this story there. After dinner we went out to a local pub (site of the crossface incident) and played a few games of dart with my brother and had a

great time.

Saturday was the SD house show in Calgary and with me not booked in Australia I was added to the card. Unfortunately I was added too last minute to be advertised (for whatever drawing power I may have in Calgary) but at least I was a surprise bonus for those who did buy tickets. The surprise bonus turned out to be a first time ever match. I wrestled Eddie Guerrero for the US Title in the second match on the card. I've always wanted to work with Eddie so this was a huge thrill for me. I've now wrestled four out of five of the immediate Guerrero family. I've worked with Chavo Sr., Mando, Eddie and Chavo Jr. All I need now is a match with Hector. In addition to finally getting to work with Eddie we were given an additional challenge. We didn't know we were working each other till 5 minutes before we had to be in the ring. I kid you not. There

were a few travel problems and last minute changes. I was originally going to do a Brother Love interview segment and didn't even have my gear on. As the show started and the first match was being introduced I was told I was on second with Eddie. Wow what a panic I was in. I had about 5 minutes to get my gear on, prepare for a match, and hit the ring. Thankfully I was in the ring with one of the best in the business, because I was in more of a panic over getting dressed in time than over having a good match.

Eddie and I went to the ring to work each other for the very first time and just did it out there. In the end I was quite happy with the match (working that way brings out a whole different kind of match), but at the same time disappointed we didn't have more time to prepare. I love matches where I have to step up to my opponent and I think Eddie and I could have really torn the house down if we had more prep-time. I hope

everyone in attendance enjoyed the night as much as I did. The great Calgary response was awesome and seeing the SmackDown roster again was great. Sunday I was off to Vancouver for some PR and to do a charity event at Hastings Race Track. We did a charity event/race with The Variety Club, which raised a lot of money. They ran a special WWE race where they assigned each horse the name of a WWE Superstar and all proceeds went to the Variety Club. Tommy Dreamer, Ivory, and I were in attendance for the race and my horse came in second to Ivory's horse. Ivory even placed a $20 bet on herself and won $97. In addition to the race we did an autograph session and a charity fundraising lunch, which I think raised an additional $20,000 for the Variety Club.

It was a beautiful day at the track, sunny, warm and everyone treated us like gold. If that wasn't good enough we got to meet a lot of great fans and raise money for a

worthy cause. Not a bad week in my books!

Till next week,
Lance Storm

Crossface, follow up

I figure I have to share the crossface story with you now, because I doubt Edge's old blog is still around so it's not like you have the option of reading it elsewhere. So while Edge and I were out at the pub playing darts, SmackDown was on TV. We were half watching the show while we played darts and a Chris Benoit match came on the TV and in the finish Chris used his Crossface finisher. I've never talked about this publicly but it always drove me crazy that Benoit applied the cross face incorrectly, and I mentioned it to Edge while we were playing darts. He asked what I meant, how exactly was it wrong. So I started to explain to him that for the move to be applied properly you trap the left arm of your

opponent with your legs, but in order to apply the most pressure you apply the crossface with your left forearm and pull the head to the right, away from the trapped left arm. Benoit tended to pull back on the chin, lifting the opponent's head off the mat. This was more visual (likely the reason why he did it) but not the way to maximize the hold. In my explanation I pointed out that the key to submission holds is to trap one part of the body in place then pry another part in the opposite direction. To further my point I decided to demonstrate the accurate technique on my buddy and trap his left arm with my left arm then use my right forearm to push his head the opposite direction. I was very gentle and light (it's not like I was trying to stretch my buddy) but Edge tensed up a lot and was holding his breath rather uncomfortably. He didn't say anything but I could tell something was wrong so I stopped to ask him what was wrong. Once he caught

his breath and relaxed he reminded me that he had just had neck surgery and at this point could barely turn his head. While he didn't require a neck collar, he was pretty sure the doctor didn't want him getting crossfaces yet. I felt so bad. I had completely forgotten that he was out injured and had a bad neck, and here I was stretching the poor guy in a bar. It's amazing he still returns my calls.

Divas

This next commentary almost seems out of place now and if you didn't follow the product back in 2000 – 2004 you might wonder what the hell I'm talking about. This time period was a real boom for women's wrestling, and the calibre of matches they were having back then was quite superior to the level of women's wrestling now in WWE. There are still a few top shelf women workers, but as a division I doubt we will ever top the level of skill of 2002-2003. With as good as it was back then the girls still didn't get the respect they deserved which is what inspired this next article.

"Credit Where Credit is Due"

September 6, 2003

I had a rather unique experience last week. Goldust hurt his elbow and did not make the house shows, which left me in an odd spot. We were scheduled to take part in a 3-team tag team match, but with Goldust out of the picture, I was without a match. I'm sort of in the process of turning face, and don't have any steam left as a heel, so there was no other match or story line I could be fit into. With no match option for me, I suggested I be allowed to referee the Divas match. When there has been an odd man out in the past Val Venis has done it so I figured why not me. The agents said, okay, so I officiated the three way title match between

Trish Stratus, Jazz, and Molly Holly and things couldn't have worked out better. I had a ball and I hope the girls would say the same. As you may or may not know, I've got a good working relationship with the girls. Apart from Fit Finlay (the primary agent for Diva matches), I've probably spent more time than anyone else working with the girls in the ring. Fit and I have similar views on wrestling so he allows me to lend a hand whenever possible. I love teaching wrestling and the girls are the most eager to learn members of our locker room so we have a lot of fun together.

The match itself was quite good. The girls fine-tuned it each night and the match constantly improved throughout the weekend. Molly Holly won each match retaining the title, and in an effort to give the crowd a "feel good" moment at the end we did a little post-match aftermath where Trish and I ended up bumping the heels,

which then led to Trish surprising me with a rather overwhelming kiss (Yes it sucks to be me. LOL). It's days like this that help make up for all of the house show matches with Big Show (LOL). When the weekend was over I decided to check online for match feedback and see what the reactions were to the matches and I was dumbfounded by what I found.

The first arena report that I read just listed match results and listed every match except the girls. The next ones weren't any better, saying things like, "Can't remember the finish…" and then going on in length describing the amazing kiss Trish planted on me, "…don't remember the match, but man is Jazz short in person." The arena reports continued in this fashion, going on in depth with all the guys' matches and all but ignoring the girls. As if this wasn't bad enough when I was eating at a restaurant I overheard some fans talking about going to

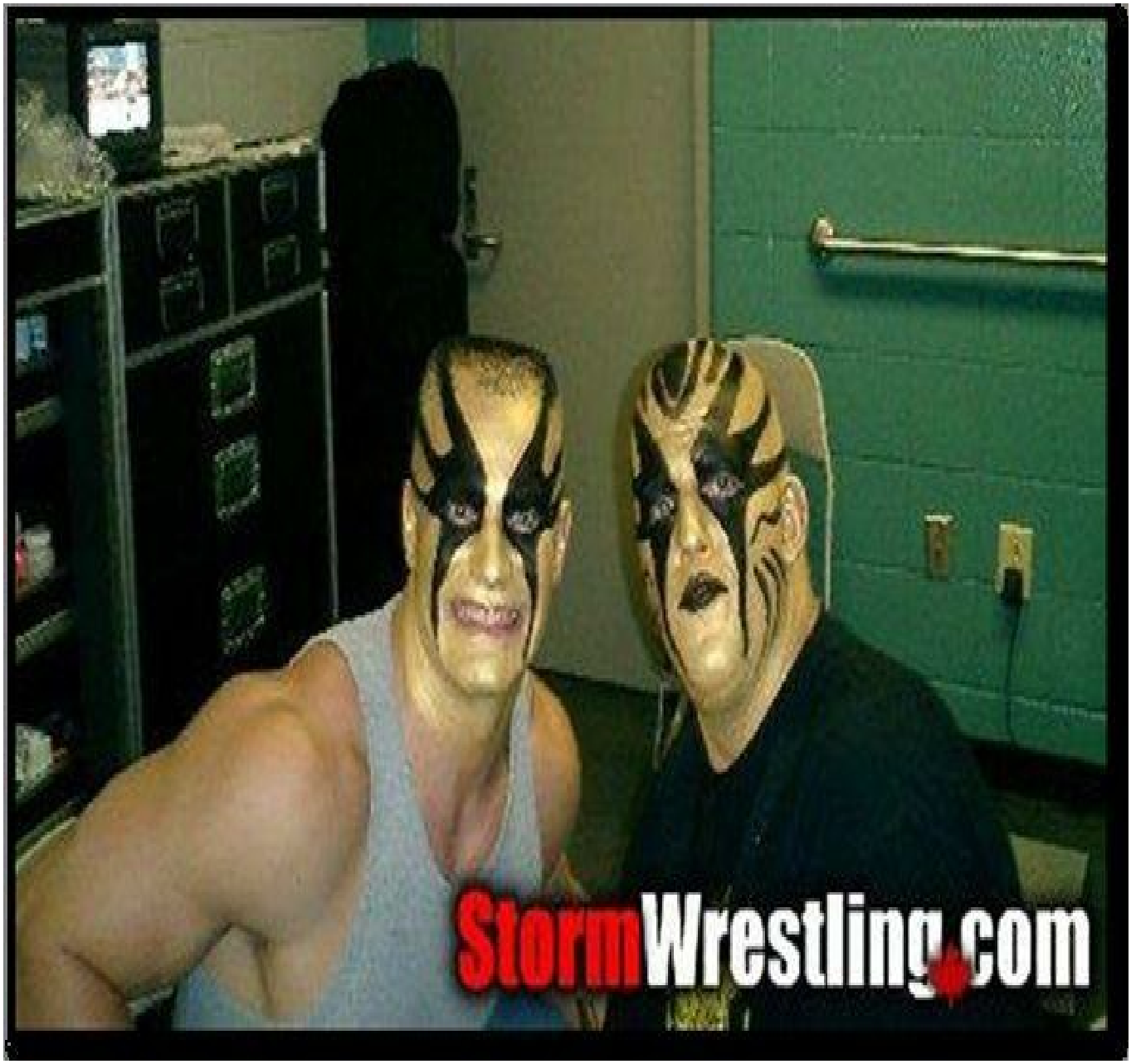
the show and when a girl asked which girls would be wrestling, one guy replied, “Does it matter?” Now I realize that women’s wrestling isn’t for everyone, and the chances of the WWE Divas ever putting out a match like Angle and Benoit are slim to none, but come on, they deserve more respect than this.

These girls bust their butts out there and work damn hard. It’s obvious to me now that people don’t appreciate the effort these girls put forth. I’ve seen them all black and blue with bruises, working through injuries and not even contemplating taking the night off. I remember one night when Trish broke her nose (fortunately it wasn’t displaced) and she wouldn’t even consider not working the next night. It wasn’t that long ago when the girls were only expected to provide T and A for the show (on SmackDown, that’s still pretty much the case), but our RAW girls have set their sights higher than that

and have continued to push the bar higher. They've gone from just looking good to having good matches "for a girls match" to just plain having good matches. I guess this is why I enjoy helping them in the ring so much. They have a love for this business, much like my own. I guess what I find so disappointing is that these girls have so much respect for this business, yet get so little respect from it.

Till next week, why don't you try actually watching one of the Diva matches and giving it a chance? It's not just about the puppies, anymore.

Lance



Goldust's elbow injury put an end to our whacky tag team.
I did not wear the face paint on a regular basis this was a one night deal.

4:10 or 10/4

I often get asked why I stopped wrestling so young. I was in my mid thirties when I packed it in, and that age is usually considered your prime. The answer isn't a simple one, as there were many factors but a chronic back injury was a main factor and this next commentary is where I first address it publicly. I'll have more to say about it after you've read it but before I let you go, I want to be clear none of this was Mark's fault. I was having back trouble long before this and the incident with Mark was very much a case of the straw that broke the camel's back. Once I finally got the problem properly diagnosed what happened in the ring with Mark had zero long term affect. Again I'll expand quite a bit on this story after you've

read it and provide you with a current health update.

"Injuries 4:10"

September 20, 2003

I had thought about doing this commentary a few days ago and then something happened, quite possibly as a result of my choice of commentary, and now it is even more appropriate. The 4:10 refers to an injury, or at least the pain caused by it. At a house show last week in Asheville, NC I was in the trainer's room taping up, when I overheard Chris (our trainer) asking one of our lesser experienced workers (less than 5 years in) the oh so common question, "On a scale from 1-10, 1 being the least and 10 being the most pain you've ever been in, how bad does it hurt?"

This is the question which is always

asked when an injury is being assessed. This particular injury wasn't a major one as the answer to the question was "2." I sort of laughed to myself at this response, thinking that I wish I was at a 2, ever. I even joked about it later with HHH that I don't remember the last time I felt like a 2. We both agreed that a good day off at home often results in a nice relaxing 4. It is often said that when you become a wrestler you have to resign yourself to a life in pain. This is certainly true, at least to an extent. There are days that go by that I don't consider myself to be in pain but they are not the majority and may be due more to the fact that I've just got accustomed to most of my minor aches and pains and don't even bother to register them as pain any more.

I've got several minor (at least I consider then minor) chronic injuries or aches and pains. I've got a loose left shoulder socket, which aches if I walk a lot. The

constant swinging of my arms causes what I would call a strong discomfort. If you ever see me walking in a mall, and notice that I look odd walking with my left hand tucked into my belt behind my back its because that is the only comfortable way to take the weight off my shoulder and easy my pain. I also have a spot on my left knee that on occasion sends me screaming in pain. It's right on the head of the quad muscle above my knee on the inside. I had a small tear there once, way back in 1993. I'm not sure if there is a damaged nerve end or what but every once in a while if I touch it in just the right spot or put weight on that particular spot it feels like someone is stabbing me with a knife. I was worried it would cause re-injury but it's been like this now for 10 years and apart from the pain, it has never caused a problem. Both of my elbows click and lock up on occasion. The lock up is more of a sticky spot where I get a sharp pain

extending it but if I force it through there is a click or crack and it straightens out and doesn't hurt any more. The right elbow I hyper-extended (which is why I wear that awful brace) and left elbow I had twisted all to hell by Balls Mahoney back in SMW and is now prone to hyper-flexion. It's rather ironic really; one elbow bends too much and the other straightens too far. In addition to all that I'm developing arthritis in my neck (I assume just from wear and tear of 13 years of bumping).

So with these problems, as well as a few others, you can see how a 2 didn't really stir up a whole lot of sympathy in me, and perhaps for that I am now paying the price. I've said once or twice before that you should never make light of injuries and I guess that is what I did. I am not a superstitious person but I can't help but think my words and thoughts have come back to haunt me. On RAW last week,

Goldust and I wrestled Rodney Mack and Mark Henry, and I got hurt. Oh yes I joked that I was always in pain and now here I am in a whole lot more of it. The injury happened when Mark picked me up in the bear hug and rammed me into the turnbuckle. I hit the buckle higher than I wanted to and took the brunt of my weight as well as Mark's on my pelvis, against the top turnbuckle. I've had some problems with my pelvis in the past and this blow put it over the top. My entire @$$ and pelvis went numb and hurt like hell. I'm not sure how it can do both but that's what it did. Thankfully I didn't have much else to do in the match as I was pretty much done. After the match I was having difficulty walking and when the adrenaline wore off I was unable to walk unassisted. My right leg was weak and would not support my weight. Each attempted step sent screams of pain through my pelvis and tail bone (I'm not

talking 2's here either, this was more an 8 or 9).

I left the building on crutches wondering if I had cracked my pelvis. The doctor in attendance said it wouldn't matter too much if I went to be checked out immediately or once I got home so I opted for when I got home. Whenever possible get home first, at least that's my theory. If for whatever reason doctors want you to stay put it's better to stay put at home than on the road. Thankfully after seeing my doctor there were no fractures. It did take me 2 days before I was walking again and even then I was using one crutch as a cane because I would ache after only a few minutes on my feet.

It is because of this injury that I wasn't at RAW this week, but fret not I plan to be back on the road this coming weekend. With nothing broken it is only pain I have to deal with and that is becoming old hat. I'm

quickly approaching that oh so familiar 4 and as long as that first bump back doesn't send me too far back up that scale it should be business as usual. If I can borrow a quote from Dr. Death Steve Williams, "It ain't Ballet baby!"

Till next week, stay healthy
Lance

4:10 or 10/4 cont.

My back did get progressively worse after the match with Mark Henry, and my back trouble was one of the primary reasons I decided to retire so young. I wasn't suffering chronic pain but my hips would tighten up quite badly which made me hunch a bit and limp. Worse than that, certain bumps like body slams or backdrops would send shooting pain down my right leg and I would lose strength in that leg to the point where standing was problematic. If I avoided those bumps I wasn't too bad but I could certainly see the writing on the wall.

I really want to reiterate that none of this was caused by Mark Henry; my back was getting bad and he stiffed me a bit right in the wrong spot which aggravated the

existing injury. Mark was also very professional about it and really went out of his way to not only apologize but to make it up to me. There is an unofficial protocol the boys follow when injuries happen at their hands and believe me Mark went above and beyond. He even offered to fly me to Texas to see his doctor for a treatment that had helped him out with an injury. After my time off I was back on the road working through my back trouble while WWE and their medical staff tried to diagnose my problem. They sent me to several people including getting an MRI the weekend of the Survivor Series. The MRI results showed that I had 4 minor bulging discs in my lumbar, and the doctors figured they had the problem solved, so WWE quit sending me to doctors. I knew this wasn't the problem because I could feel the difference when the disc problem flared up and it was completely different than the other problem.

I was moved into the tag program with Val which was a blessing because Val and I split the workload and on shows where my back was worse, he took the majority of the bumps and let me rest. I owe Val a lot for that. The problem persisted and with WWE not having anything of interest for me creatively I decided to pack it in, and took the role of head trainer in the WWE developmental program.

Okay now here is the real crazy part. About the time of the Mark Henry match Hurricane recommended the book "Critical Space" by Greg Rucka to me. I looked at the book and thought I'd get to it eventually but never got around to it until I was retired and teaching in developmental. When reading the book, the main character Atticus Kodiak started experiencing the same type of back problems I had, and was diagnosed with Iliopsoas. The book went on to describe the treatment and his problem was cured. I

immediately started looking up this condition online and printing everything I could find. I made a doctor's appointment and took the stuff with me and asked, "Is this my problem?" Turns out it was and after some stretching and massage therapy my problem was pretty much fixed.

The gist of the problem was the psoas muscle, which runs from your hip flexor area to your lumbar, was in a chronic spasm. The spasm was putting a major strain on my lumbar (probably the cause of the bulging discs) and slightly tilting my pelvis. With my pelvis tilted I would land heavier on my right sciatic insertion causing the impingement of my sciatic nerve, which caused the pain and weakness in my leg. From landing on that spot for so long I do have some calcification at the sciatic insertion still but with proper stretching and occasional massage therapy the problem is pretty much behind me. Had I read Critical

Space when Hurricane first told me to, I would have had the problem diagnosed before it ever became a serious problem and who knows how much different my career path would have been.

Through my book club I did end up getting to know Greg Rucka and I was able to thank him for helping diagnosing my back problem and saving me a lot of pain and discomfort.

One of the many tag team matches I had

on the road with Val Venis that kept me going despite my back problems. That's the late Lance Cade in the ring with me. He left us way too young.

“Stu Hart 1915-2003”

October 18, 2003

As most of you should know by now Stu Hart passed away, at the age of 88. Stu is best known for being the father of both Bret and Owen Hart, but to the wrestling industry and the city of Calgary he was so much more than that. Being a part of both, I was struck pretty hard by the news of his death. Considering his age, I probably shouldn’t have been as shocked as I was, but there are certain things in life you just never consider. Stu Hart was one of those tough old veterans you just figured would always be there. Despite any of the medical problems he had in the past, he always just seemed too tough to ever die. Even in a

wheelchair, as he was the last time I saw him, he had an iron clad handshake that still made me think that this guy could kick my ass. Stu Hart was more than just a man, he was a tradition. A tradition, a part of the history of the wrestling industry and the city of Calgary, he will be sorely missed.

While I didn't know Stu all that well, I did have the good fortune of meeting him on several occasions, and thanks to a fan from this site, I even have a photograph of us together. Stu was indirectly a big part of why and how I got into this business, and I will always be grateful for that. His Stampede Wrestling Legacy was what turned me into a wrestling fan. Most of the guys I loved watching honed their skills in Stampede Wrestling; it was one of the best independent organizations there ever was. The British Bulldogs, Bret and Owen Hart, Jim Neidhart, Brian Pillman, Bad News Allen, Gerry Morrow, Jushin Liger and so

many more competed in Stampede Wrestling. If you go back far enough almost every big name in this industry worked for Stu at one point in time or another. It was this Stampede Wrestling tradition of great workers that led me to Calgary to become a wrestler.

In the summer of 1990 I moved to Calgary and enrolled in the Hart Brothers' Pro-Wrestling Camp, where Stu continued his indirect involvement in my career. Stu was 75 at the time and wasn't directly involved in the camp any more, but his son Keith was, and he helped trained me in that same Calgary tradition the Harts are so famous (or rather infamous) for. I'm proud to say I was trained by the Harts, and I like to think that you can actually see a piece of that Calgary Wrestling Tradition in my work today.

We often speak of "The Hart Wrestling Family." There were of course Stu, Helen,

and their twelve children, but I think on a lot of levels there is so much more to it than that. There is a certain kinship among those of us who were lucky enough to both live and survive the Stampede Wrestling experience. We are all, in a way, an extended member of the Hart Wrestling Family, and we all shared a very sad day with the passing of the head of the family, Stu Hart. He will be missed, but more importantly, remembered.

Lance Evers

The Funeral

In addition to writing the above tribute commentary for Stu I also attended his funeral, which was a rather odd experience that I will share with you now. With Stu and the Hart family being such a big part of WWE, it was expected that there would be a big WWE presence at the funeral; almost the entire company had attended Owen Hart's funeral 4 years earlier. There was a separate room set aside down stairs at the church so the boys could avoid the crowds and hang out there until right before the service would start. They also reserved the first few rows of seats for WWE guys so we were all set up. Edge and I are real good friends so I picked him up when he flew in

and we headed to the funeral together. We found a parking spot and slipped in the back and headed downstairs to the private room, which oddly enough was completely empty. We weren't that early so we were worried we might be in the wrong spot.

We knew the road schedule had been brutal lately and a few of the boys were unable to come but surely a few of them would be there by now. Edge called the office guy to see where he was hoping they had arrived already and could direct us where we were supposed to be. He told us that he was with Vince, JR, and Carl DeMarco (WWE Canada head cheese) and were running late but on their way. So Edge and I sat tight hoping we were in the right place. Edge then got a call back from the office guy who told him they were entering the building now and we should come up and meet them so we could be ushered in for the service. We hurried up stairs and fell in

line behind Vince and company and entered the chapel. We were ushered right up to the front and expecting more people to come, walked right to the end of the aisle and sat down right beside each other. The church was packed but there were 2 rows of seats that were reserved for the WWE, and they were completely empty. We waited for a few minutes, no one else showed, and the service began. So here the 6 of us were sitting in the front far right corner packed super tight shoulder to shoulder with likely 40 empty seats beside us and a full empty row behind us. We looked and felt like complete morons, but were afraid to move because the service had started and we didn't want to be disrespectful and start shuffling chairs.

So we sat there uncomfortably like a bunch of sardines, no doubt looking like anti social fools. The service was very nice but when Bret got up to speak he kept looking

over at us with a strange look on his face. I kept wondering if he was looking our way because of the tension that no doubt still existed between him and Vince, out of disappointment at the lack of turnout, or because he was wondering why we sat in such a ridiculous fashion. It was one of the more awkward times in my life. After the service Vince and company headed right back to the airport, but Edge and I hung around to speak to a few of the family members. It quickly turned into a fan meet and greet so we retreated out the back door and headed home; it was a strange day indeed.

And Now for Something Completely Different

One of the great things about running my website was my Book Club. I really enjoyed doing it and it led to a lot of great friendships and experiences. I would have never started the club if not for Lynne Winter, who edited Rampage Wrestling magazine back then. She did an article on me which led to my friendship with David Morrell. I became friends with both Lynne and her husband Doug, as well as good friends with David Morrell. The following is a tale of meetings with both that are real highlights of my life. While I've lost touch a bit with Lynne and Doug, I still keep in contact with David and a year or so ago when he was in town speaking at a

conference we hooked up again and I had him over to the house for dinner.

Dear Lance,

Hi, it's Lynne Winter, the editor of RAMPAGE. You may remember that Francine Fournier had put us in touch about doing an interview for the magazine, and I'm sorry it didn't work out. It would have been a lot of fun for me. My husband and I have been following your career since your ECW days, and we're so happy you have achieved well deserved success. We're looking forward to the future and what it will hold for you.

Because WCW policies prevented an interview, we asked our friend and colleague, Dave Bischoff, to write a wonderful article about you for RAMPAGE. I'm sending some copies along. I hope you like it. Dave is an award-winning fiction writer, and he was called "the greatest living wrestling writer" by the WASHINGTON POST. I think you'll see why when you read the article.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that you're a fan of David Morrell. Small world. He's an old friend of ours, and I thought you might enjoy having a signed copy of one of his books. (He was definitely surprised to find his name mentioned in a wrestling magazine!)

I can't imagine the restrictions on talent giving outside interviews will be any different under WWF's direction, but should you find yourself in a situation that you can, just let me know. Otherwise, we'll be happy to cover you in future articles like the one by Dave Bischoff.

You can reach me at [redacted] I'll look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, take good care of yourself and good luck!

Lynne Winter
Editor in Chief
RAMPAGE

160

P.S. I'm also enclosing the latest issue (Sept. '01)

Best,
Lynne

The letter that started it all, not just Book Marks, but many friendships.

"Reading, Writing, and Wrestling"

November 2, 2003

Sorry I've been away so much of late, but I've been extremely busy. I'm not complaining about it, however, as I've been busy by choice. I attended 2 writers' conventions this past month. The first convention was Bouchercon, which is a huge mystery writer's convention and was held in Las Vegas. Lee Child (Author of "Killing Floor", Book Marks: Jan. 2003) and my long time Internet friend and favourite author, David Morrell ("Brotherhood of the Rose", Book Marks: Dec. 2001, and "Long Lost", Book Marks: June 2002) were in attendance. It was the chance to finally meet David in

person that made me attend this year and truth be told I didn't make a single conference event. My wife has never been to Vegas before and has always wanted to so I managed to kill two birds with one stone by arranging a great getaway for my wife and me in conjunction with this chance to meet a couple of great authors.

Vegas itself was a ton of fun. There is so much to do in that city, besides gamble. We went to a show, shopped, did some sightseeing and just generally had a great time. I managed a brief meeting with Lee Child, which was great; he's a real class act. If you haven't read any of his work, you are really missing out.

The highlight of the trip was finally meeting David Morrell. The four of us (me and my wife, he and his) had a wonderful dinner at an Italian restaurant inside the Venetian hotel. When you've only spoke with someone online you never know for

sure what you're getting into, but we genuinely hit it off and had a fabulous time. I doubt this will end up being a one-time meeting.

The second convention was this past week in Washington DC for the "World Fantasy Convention." WFC is the major fantasy and horror writers' convention and Douglas E. Winter (Author of "RUN", Book Marks: June-July 2003) was the master of ceremonies. Doug invited me to be his guest at the convention and I jumped at the chance. Doug and his wife Lynne were a big part in getting me to start Book Marks, so I was excited to finally meet them in person. I flew to DC on Thursday, had dinner with Doug and Lynne as well as F. Paul Wilson (Author of "The Tomb", Book Marks: Aug. 2002) and his wife. Again it was a great time with great people. I attended the convention on Friday and even spoke on a panel. Doug had arranged to have me on a panel to

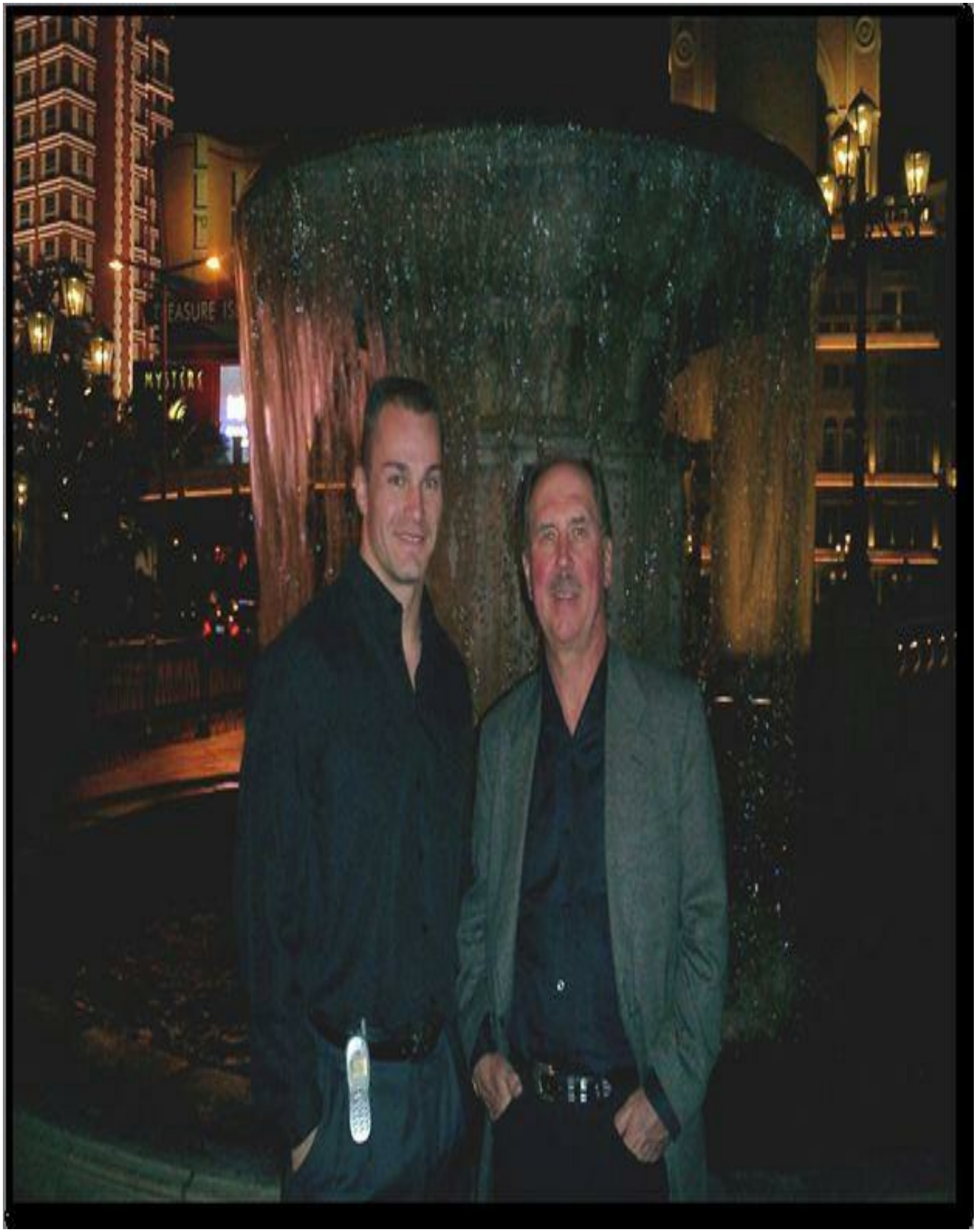
discuss my Book Club. There were 4 of us on the panel (Doug, Lynne, F. Paul Wilson, and myself), and to be honest I had absolutely no idea what the hell I was going to say or talk about. This seemed to work out fine as I don't think anyone who showed up to see the "Tag Team: Wrestling and Writing" discussion panel had any clue what the hell they would be hearing.

Looking back I think the panel was a huge success. I received plenty of favourable feedback and I had a great time doing it. I ended up with so much to say we actually ran long on time. I think I managed to open a few eyes as to what it really is that I do for a living and what I'm trying to accomplish with my Club. I helped dispel the common held believe that pro-athletes, and even more so pro-wrestlers, are nothing but a bunch of muscle bound oafs who can't carry on a meaningful conversation. I drew several parallels between the "storytelling" I do in

the ring during a match, and the "storytelling" authors do in writing a book. We talked about the importance of literacy and reading and how through my effort and the efforts of the authors who have taken part in my Club, we are providing a very unique experience: a chance for people to expand their minds, by either discovering the joy of reading, or exploring new authors and books. Where else can you read a book, watch a movie, listen to a CD, or anything for that matter, and have the person who wrote the book, movie, song, hear your thoughts and respond to them?

I think I may have picked up a few more Book Marks at the convention and I hope more of you here will join us as well.

Till next week, good reading.
Lance


EASURE IS
MYSTERE

David Morrell and I out front of the Venetian in Vegas Bouchercon weekend. See no fanny pack I do have some class.

FRIDAY

2:00-2:30 PM (Congressional C/D)
Reading: Jack Dann

2:00-3:00 PM (Regency Foyer)
The Place of Place
Memorable locales or settings and why they haunt the reader. Can you take the Arkham out of Lovecraft and still call it Lovecraft?
Catherine Asaro (M); Fiona McIntosh; Lucius Shepard; Jeffrey VanderMeer

2:00-3:00 PM (Capitol)
The Achievement of W. Paul Ganley
This panel is a celebration of the accomplishments of our publisher Guest of Honor.
Brian Lumley; D.H. Olson; Stuart David Schiff; Darrell Schweitzer

2:30-3:00 PM (Congressional C/D)
Reading: *Joe Haldeman*

3:00-3:30 PM (Congressional C/D)
Reading: *Gregory Frost*

3:00-4:00 PM (Regency Foyer)
Tag Team Wrestling with Taste
Lance Storm; F. Paul Wilson; Douglas E. Winter; Lynne Winter

3:00-4:00 PM (Capitol)
Scaring the Little Monsters
Dark fantasy for the young; what makes it scary, but not too scary.
Barbara Ferrenz; Garth Nix; Sharyn November (M); Nancy Springer

FRIDAY

3:30-4:00 PM (Congressional C/D)
Reading: *Brian Lumley*

4:00-4:30 PM (Congressional C/D)
Reading: *Michael Swanwick*

4:00-5:00 PM
Passionate Crossovers (Regency Foyer)
Combinations of romance with the fantasy, horror, and sf genres are becoming commonplace. Is this something new or have they always been around? What are the pleasures and pitfalls of these crossovers?
Laura Anne Gilman (M); Mary Theresa Hussey; J. Ardian Lee; Rebecca York

4:00-5:00 PM (Capitol)
W. Paul Ganley Guest of Honor Interview
W. Paul Ganley; Darrell Schweitzer, interviewer

4:30-5:00 PM (Congressional C/D)
Reading: *Steve Rasnic Tem*

5:00-8:00 PM Dinner Break

8:00-8:30 pm (Valley Forge/Yorktown/Ticonderoga)
Autograph Reception Setup

8:30-10:30 PM (Valley Forge/Yorktown/Ticonderoga)
Autograph Reception
There is no need for authors to sign up in advance to give autographs; all

The WFC program listing my appearance on a panel with F.Paul Wilson, and Doug & Lynne Winter.

Houston Hates Me

The title “Houston we have a problem” is the most recycled commentary name I have. While some people might blame this on a lack of creativity I blame it on the fact that this damn city hates me. I have had more trials and tribulations in and around this city than any other place on earth. I’ve often said the worst trips make for the best stories so while I hate Houston for the chaos it’s been to me, I have to thank it for all the great stories. Enjoy!

“Houston: We have a problem”

November 19, 2003

I haven’t had the best of luck whilst traveling in Houston. Houston is where I spent 9/11 and while this past week certainly wasn’t the globally felt disaster of 9/11, it was still a tremendously huge pain in the ass. Now some of you may be wondering, Houston, wasn’t SmackDown in Houston? Yes, SmackDown was in Houston, but RAW was in Beaumont, TX, which is just 95 miles east. With Houston being a large airline hub, both crews flew in and out of Houston. We landed Monday morning and had to head straight to the building in Beaumont. On our drive East on I-10 we heard on the radio that a tornado had

actually touched down just northwest of Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport (the one we were flying in and out of) and that a severe tornado watch was in effect. Weather wasn't too bad where we were so we didn't think too much of it and just drove to the show. During the show word got around that several tornados had hit Houston and that they had closed I-10 east of Houston. For those of you with poor short-term memory, we had just driven East on I-10 from Houston to get to Beaumont. Yes they had just closed the road we needed to get back to Houston to catch our morning flight home. Always the travel optimists (I'm not sure why we're optimistic, considering all of the travel difficulties we experience) we figured they'd get the roads open before we needed them later that night.

By the end of the show, word was that they had closed Houston Intercontinental,

all local hotels were sold out (we of course hadn't checked in or made reservations yet) and I-10 was still closed. At this time I was checking maps to see how far we were from New Orleans, in hopes of laying groundwork for a backup plan. Hurricane, Christian, and I decided to give I-10 a go anyway and hope for the best in Houston. Weather was atrocious, but the roads were drivable. Halfway to Houston, brake lights started to light up. I slowed down (I was driving while Christian and Hurricane napped; be sure to watch Confidential this week for details on this travel partner violation) and saw a Tractor Trailer jackknifed completely sideways across I-10 Westbound (again for the directionally challenged, the direction we were traveling). When I got up to the accident there was one car ahead of us and another pulled off to the side. The one car inched around the accident on the shoulder and got by. I then decided to

do the same. As we pulled up on the shoulder I realized that the car on the shoulder was Test and one of the referees whose last name I can't even begin to spell so he will remain nameless. Test was on his cell phone and said referee had a flashlight and was inspecting the accident.

We pulled off to find out what was going on and realized that the transport had completely pinned and crushed a car up against the cement divider of the highway. Test was talking to the police and our nameless referee was yelling that the guy in the car was breathing but crushed pretty bad, and that there was no way they were getting him out of there. At this point we saw sirens pulling up from the other direction and tried to decide what to do. We didn't want to just drive off and worry about ourselves but couldn't think of any help we could really provide. Emergency crews were arriving and traffic was backing up behind

us. We took the chance while we had it and eased back on I-10 and continued west. It was a pretty cautious quiet drive from that point with all of us hoping the guy in the car would make it.

We made it to Houston but our adventure wasn't over yet. On Belt Line 8 heading north to the airport we hit a huge water covered patch of road. There was only one other car on the road and it was a large truck, which had stopped, obviously debating how far the washed out section extended and whether or not he could make it to the other side safely. I decided to try it but before too long I could feel the water splashing against the floor of the car and could see no end in sight to the water. Eventually I chickened out and backed all the way out of the water. I really didn't want to get stuck in a lake in a flooded rental car at 1am. We backtracked and found another way to the airport.

Now for the fun part: finding a hotel. The first couple places we tried all but laughed at us, claiming no vacancy. There is a 24 hour breakfast place by the airport and Christian decided that we were most likely going to spend the next 5 hours sitting there drinking coffee while trying to stay awake. On our way there we made a few more unsuccessful attempts to find rooms, until we happened along a Motel 6. Motel 6's are usually on our Cold Day in Hell list, but apparently, the difference between a Cold Day in Hell and Wet Day in Houston is really just splitting hairs. Christian ran in to check if they had rooms, while Hurricane decided he didn't care anymore and was sleeping in the car. Christian came back out and said, "They've got 2 rooms, smoking, $37, no airport shuttle."

Hurricane and Christian had a 7:30 flight and mine was just after 9. I told them I needed sleep. I'd drop them at the terminal

then return the car in the morning, so I wouldn't be all that early. Hurricane said great, you guys take the rooms; I'm sleeping in the car.

Christian and I went to check in, but wait! We weren't done yet. Christian told the lady we'd take the rooms. She replied that she only had one room left, everything else, sold-out!

"But you told me a minute ago that you had two rooms?"
"Sorry, I only have one room, with two double beds."
"Fine, it's only 4 ½ hours we'll share."

To this the lady replied, "Would you like smoking or non?" Okay this is where I started losing it. If there was only one room left in the hotel how could she be offering us an option? After further futile debate, she checked us in and tried to show us on a map

where our room was located. I've been in hotels before where this is required, but this Motel 6 had one hallway and three floors. We were in room 311. I'm guessing we were on the third floor, and more often than not, room numbers are in order so I'm pretty sure we could have found it without the 5 minute Motel 6 geography lesson. Miraculously enough our room was on the third floor and as I predicted between rooms 310 and 312. We settled in and despite a power outage and a fire alarm, managed to get almost 4 quality hours of sleep before returning to the car to scare the living hell out of The Hurricane. I guess we could have woken him nicely but where is the fun in that. Thankfully flights were on time in the morning and we all headed home.

Till next week, stay out of Houston.
Lance Storm

“Storm Country”

January 12, 2004

This past week our house show loop took us through eastern Canada. We started off in Oshawa, ON, which is more or less a suburb of Toronto, before heading to the Maritimes with shows in Halifax and St. John’s. I love doing house shows in Canada because the crowds are always very pro-Canada (gee go figure) and us Canadian boys always get a warmer than usual welcome. Oshawa ended up being very cool, as my Mom and Step-Dad were in Toronto this weekend so I got to hook up with them for dinner and they got to see me wrestle. Living on the other side of the country from most of your family really sucks so

whenever I get the chance for an extra visit I jump at it. The show itself was fairly uneventful but the same can't be said for the rest of the tour. For some completely unexplained reason I am over like crazy in the Maritimes. The Maritimes, for those of you who don't know, is the group name given to Canada's Atlantic Provinces. Our Saturday show was in Halifax, NS, and I may be more over in this town than any other city in the world. I'm not completely sure why; I think it is a combination of a lot of things. My strong Pro-Canada push in WCW certainly contributed but that does not explain why this city reacts more than any other Canadian venue. I think the Internet is also a strong factor. There doesn't seem to be as much to do out here so I think fans spend a larger portion of their time online. This is not so much a knock on their city as much as just a realization that most entertainment events don't venture this far

east. When concert tours and other traveling shows map out their 6-8 Canadian dates for their World Tour, Atlantic Canada is more often than not overlooked. I'm about as Internet friendly as the boys get and I likely spend more time with you guys, via this site, than I sometimes spend with my wife and kids.

I seem to be the wrestler of choice for the Pro-Canadian, Internet savvy wrestling fan. Or to put it in laymen terms, I'm OVER like Grover, baby! I had so much fun in Halifax. I wrestled a tag match with Val Venis vs. Tyson Tomko & Kevin Fertig (two developmental guys). Val and Fertig were going to start the match but before they could even tie up the crowd broke into a HUGE "We Want Storm" chant. I popped huge and Val realized it was pointless for him to start the match so we made the tag and switched things up. The crowd couldn't have been happier and they popped for

everything I did. I did a few things with Fertig then tagged my partner back in. Unfortunately, for Val anyway, this was not what the crowd wanted. No sooner had he stepped into the ring another, "We Want Storm" chant erupted. This chant was followed by a "Make the Tag" chant, and I was damn near laughing out loud on the apron, while apologizing to Val for the strong crowd reaction. There is nothing worse than being a baby face no one wants to see. Fertig and Tomko then cut Val off and started beating the hell out of him. The crowd continued off and on with the "We Want Storm" chants until I made the big tag and made my comeback. Again the crowd was with me all the way and I had the time of my life. Everything is so much more fun when the crowd is into what you do. It also doesn't hurt the old ego to be quite probably the most over guy in the building. It doesn't happen too often so I eat it up when I can.

Sunday night in St John's, NF wasn't quite as over the top as Halifax but there was a very strong "We Want Lance" chant throughout this match as well. If we could just do regular television tapings in the Maritimes (I don't think Newfoundland is technically part of the Maritimes, but I group it together because we always run them together) I could be a top baby face and I would likely get my World Title run. In all seriousness, I just want to thank everyone who came out to the shows this week, and more importantly say how much of a difference you made to me. I had so much fun it was ridiculous. I was smiling from ear to ear and I owe it all to you. Thanks to all, and let me close by saying, "Halifax is Storm Country!" You guys are the best.

Till next week,
Lance

Moon Dance

This next commentary is a fun little tale of one of my favourite places to eat on the road. Everyone should be well aware of my love for the Cracker Barrel franchise, but there were a few unique specific places I liked to eat as well. There is the famous Skyline Diner in Newark, NJ, and there was, was being the key word here, The Moon Dance Diner in Chicago, Ill.

“No Joy in Mudville”

January 22, 2004

Fear not, the mighty Casey did not strike out, and truth be told, we didn’t even run a show in Mudville. The lack of joy which I reference was in Chicago. Since I couldn’t think of a catchy title about Chicago, I chose Mudville instead. Please indulge the artistic license. Chicago is actually one of my favourite towns to wrestle in. We always draw well in Chicago and the crowd there is about as rowdy as they come. Moreover, I can also catch a direct flight home out of Chicago, which is a rarity for me. There is one other reason for which I love Chicago or at least there used to be, The Moon Dance Diner. The Moon Dance

Diner was the top secret kayfabe eating-place of Edge and Christian. They only shared this secret breakfast place with a chosen few and when I joined WWE I was welcomed into their Chicago tradition. The Moon Dance Diner was famous for their amazing pancakes. It was a traditional rib to convince any new first time eaters to order a full order of pancakes, while everyone else secretly ordered 1. The pancakes would arrive on a plate the size of a hubcap and would be hanging over the edges. A full stack of three could feed a small country. I think I only ever saw one person (TNA's Eric Young) complete the full order, and I was forced to buy his entire breakfast as a reward. In addition to the size of the pancakes they came in an abundance of flavours. My personal favourite was the Crunch Berry, which was a blueberry pancake with granola.

This past week our Friday show was in

Des Moines, IA and Saturday in Madison, WI. After the Des Moines show we had a group flight to Chicago, and then we would drive on to Madison. At the airport Saturday morning things weren't going well. I rented a car from Budget and the thing stunk of cigarette smoke. I checked the ashtray to find it full of butts. The car had not been cleaned after the previous user. I complained to Budget and was assured I would be compensated when I returned the vehicle. My compensation amounted to a $3 discount and I ended up in a lengthy argument with the lady at the counter. I explained to her that a WHOPPING $3 discount didn't amount to a hill of beans and that she should try driving around in a stinky ashtray for a day to see how she liked it. I'd be more than happy to pay her $3 for her troubles.

If that wasn't enough, the check in guy for United Airlines was an even bigger @$$. I handed him my ID and Frequent flier card

when I checked in. When he handed everything back to me I noticed that my frequent flier number wasn't on my boarding pass. I'm a Star Alliance Gold member and get priority boarding. I asked the guy if he put my number in. He told me he didn't. I asked him nicely if he would. He replied no, saying he was too busy. This is where I started getting upset, and started pointing out that I'm pretty sure this was part of his job and that maybe if he was better at it he wouldn't be so busy. This didn't get things going any smoother and I eventually said screw it and proceeded to security. I didn't feel like missing my flight or getting arrested. I'm pretty sure Jimmy T, our head of security, is filing a complaint with United about the guy because all of us had problems with him.

By the time I got on the crowded flight I was in a ripe mood. The only thing that kept me going was my anticipation of my

Crunch Berry Pancakes at the Moon Dance Diner. When we landed in Chicago we headed straight there. I noticed on the way in the sign now said Pancakes Eggcetera, or something to that effect. Once inside the place looked different. We inquired as to what was up and were told that the Diner was under new ownership and they had a new menu. I almost broke into tears; The Moon Dance Diner was DEAD! The new owner was very nice so we decided to give it a try. The new diner has tiny 5-inch pancakes, and I would hazard to guess that if you checked out back in the trash you could find the Eggo box they came in. Service was extremely slow (although that may just be because everyone was new) and the food was okay but not memorable. They did have one specialty pancake they tried to push on us that they sell by the slice (yes, like a pie). After repeatedly turning the thing down she eventually offered us one for free to try (She

assured us they would be famous for it). We then ended up sitting around waiting an extra 15-20 minutes for the silly thing. Finally we said the hell with it and went to the front counter to pay our bill. The owner then made an even bigger deal of the pancake and we ended up standing at the front counter another 5 minutes while they got us the pancake to go.

The pancake was like a big doughy apple fritter, the size of a large pie. It was about the last thing any of us would ever eat. It sat in a bag in the back seat of our rental car for 3 days. If we had rented from Budget again, it may still be there for the next poor guy who rents the car. The greatest breakfast place in the world is dead and there is now one less reason to love Chicago. I even wore a black armband to the ring that night in Madison, WI in memory of The Moon Dance Diner. I will forever miss my Crunch Berry Pancakes!

Till next week,
Lance

Edge, Christian, and I outside another popular Chicago eatery

To PC or not to PC

These next two commentaries I'd completely forgot I wrote. They are two of my rare non-wrestling commentaries which always got great feedback. In the wrestling industry we are often accused of living in the wrestling bubble and not being aware of the greater world around us. While I am guilty of that to some extent, I do watch the news and was occasionally inspired by what I saw, which resulted in some of my better writing. I hope you agree.

“Thin Skinned”

February 29, 2004

There have been a few stories in the news of late that have gotten on my nerves. It's been eating at me a while so I thought I would say something here. I've come to the conclusion that the world is far too thin skinned. The need to be politically correct in order not to offend has gotten out of hand. There are three specific news stories that have been sticking in my craw. The first was uproar over comments made by hockey commentator Don Cherry, during a broadcast of his Coaches Corner show. I didn't see the show but I heard about the incident in the news for the better part of a week. During the show they were talking

about players wearing face shields. Cherry made a comment about how only Europeans and Frenchmen wear face shields. The implication, I'm told, is that he thinks they are wimps for doing so. French Canadian hockey players were offended and there was actually talk of cancelling Cherry's show, or adding additional tape delay to the broadcast to allow for censoring.

Let me start by saying that Don Cherry is basically employed for his controversial nature. He is the equivalent of a Jesse Ventura of hockey play by play. His whole appeal is that he is a macho, meathead kind of guy that says things real people want to say. His motto would likely be, "Win if you can, lose if you must, but always fight." Is what he said really so bad? No one even seems concerned whether there is any truth in what he said. They are just concerned that he offended people. Does anyone really care whether French players wear more face

shields that other players? Does or should anyone care if Don Cherry thinks certain players are wimps? Should he not be allowed to not only have his own opinion, but vocalize it? The rest of us should take his statements for what they are, "his opinion."

The second incident was over comments made by Conan O'Brien, while filming his show in Toronto. Again I didn't see the show but the Canadian news was in a huge uproar over some French jokes Conan made. People in Quebec were offended and demanded an apology for off colour comments made by Conan. Conan eventually did apologize for his statements and everyone seems to have calmed down. This again is absurd to me. First off, they are jokes people. Lighten up. People make Blonde jokes, French jokes, Jock jokes, it doesn't mean we have anything against any of the aforementioned groups. Also guilting someone into an apology accomplishes

what? Do they now not mean it anymore or are they just regretting saying it out loud? I think we need more of people being honest, not less.

The last incident happened in Calgary. Our former Prime Minister Jean Chretien "allegedly" made an offensive remark to a Native American man (or is that Native Canadian man up here?) while riding an elevator with him in the Provincial Courthouse. The guy had a water bottle attached to his waste pouch and the former Prime Minister "allegedly" commented that the man must have some Gin in the bottle. The guy is now in the news demanding an apology from Mr. Chretien for his "racial slur." HOLD THE PHONE! "Racial slur" threw me for a loop. When I heard the comment I thought it was a crack on the provincial court, making the statement that if you had to spend the day in Provincial court you would need a stiff drink. The fact

that the man thought the comment was a racial slur about alcoholism and the native population makes me think perhaps he has some racial issues with his own people. I would have never made that connection, and the fact that he assumed that that was the inference makes me think he may have the problem, more so than Mr. Chretien.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that the world needs to lighten up. We take offence so easily and have lost our ability to be confident in ourselves and ignore what others think. What happened to "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me?" Not to mention the whole "free speech" thing. I can't believe that the first amendment can be sited by guys like Larry Flynt to legalize pornography, yet it does not extend to our right to actually say what we want, even if we want to say something stupid. There are a lot of stereotypes out there and we should accept

them for what they are, stupid generalizations that don't apply to everyone. We all know that not all Native Americans are drunks, not all Muslims are terrorists, not all Black kids are in gangs, not all Asians have small penises and do well in math, not all Blondes are stupid, and not all jocks are illiterate steroid monkeys. If all these statements were true I'd be...well, I'd be Asian. What's up with that!!!!!

Till next week, turn the other cheek.
Lance

“Thin Skinned: Rebuttal”

March 9, 2004

My thin skinned commentary from last week stirred up some controversy. It's a shame I still don't have the comment board up, as this one would have kept it busy. For the most part your responses were favourable; most of you agreed with me, which is always comforting. There were still, however, a few of you who quite mistakenly (in my opinion) thought I was out to lunch. A lot of the negative feedback was rather ironic in nature. I almost laughed out loud when I started getting e-mails from people who found my commentary offensive and inappropriate. I think unintentionally they ended up proving my point. One guy was

even upset at my use of the term "Native American", stating that "Indians" (I think was the term he preferred) weren't native to America and that as an Indian he took offence to my use of that term. This really threw me for a loop and takes the whole Politically Correct thing to an absurd level. Taking offence to a word, especially when it obviously is not used in a derogatory manner, is just silly. Are there not enough things in the world to be upset about already, do we really need to be creating new ones?

One specific negative e-mail, which I found interesting, yet still off the mark was concerned with the Jean Chretien comments. He felt that since his comments were directed at an individual they were personal and insulting. He made this comparison to illustrate his point.

"*This is like someone walking up to you and*

insulting your intelligence because you are a wrestler or better yet saying how you are NOT an athlete and everything you do is fake because you are a wrestler. You have gone out of your way to disprove both of these with your book club and website."

This is a very good comparison, and both statements, your hypothetical one, as well as Mr Chretien's (provided his statement was intended as a racial slur) are insulting, but my point is, SO WHAT. Don't we have the right to say stupid and insulting things? I do have people make statements, like the ones you suggested, to me all the time, and I don't really care. I know they are wrong. I blow their statements off as just "stupid things people say" and go on with my life. I don't run to the local news station and demand a public apology. "In one ear and out the other" doesn't have to be a bad

thing. Have some self-confidence and be secure enough not to think less of yourself based on something said by someone who doesn't even know you. Why do we care so much what perfect strangers think?

I think my favourite e-mail was a lengthy positive one by Roger. I'm going to give you a few of the better quotes from his e-mail because it was very entertaining.

"*Let me start by saying that your last commentary hit home to my barnacle-encrusted heart. I believe I know exactly where you are coming from...*"

"*...about the statement that you should have the right to say what you want, even if it is something stupid. God I couldn't agree more. See, I'm prone to saying outrageously stupid things. But I believe that it also takes an outrageously stupid person to get offended at some of the things I say*"

"Being human is one of the best excuses ever for being stupid. If I were to get angry every time someone said something dumb, I'd spend a lot of time just being angry. It's silly, immature, and petty."

Amen Roger! Here's a guy that knows what's what. He doesn't take himself too seriously, and he isn't going to waste his time giving credence to absurd things said by absurd people. This was the whole point I was trying to make. People have the right to be stupid and people have the right to ignore stupid people and the things they say, and just get on with their lives.

Till next week,
Lance

Mania XX: Where it all begins to end

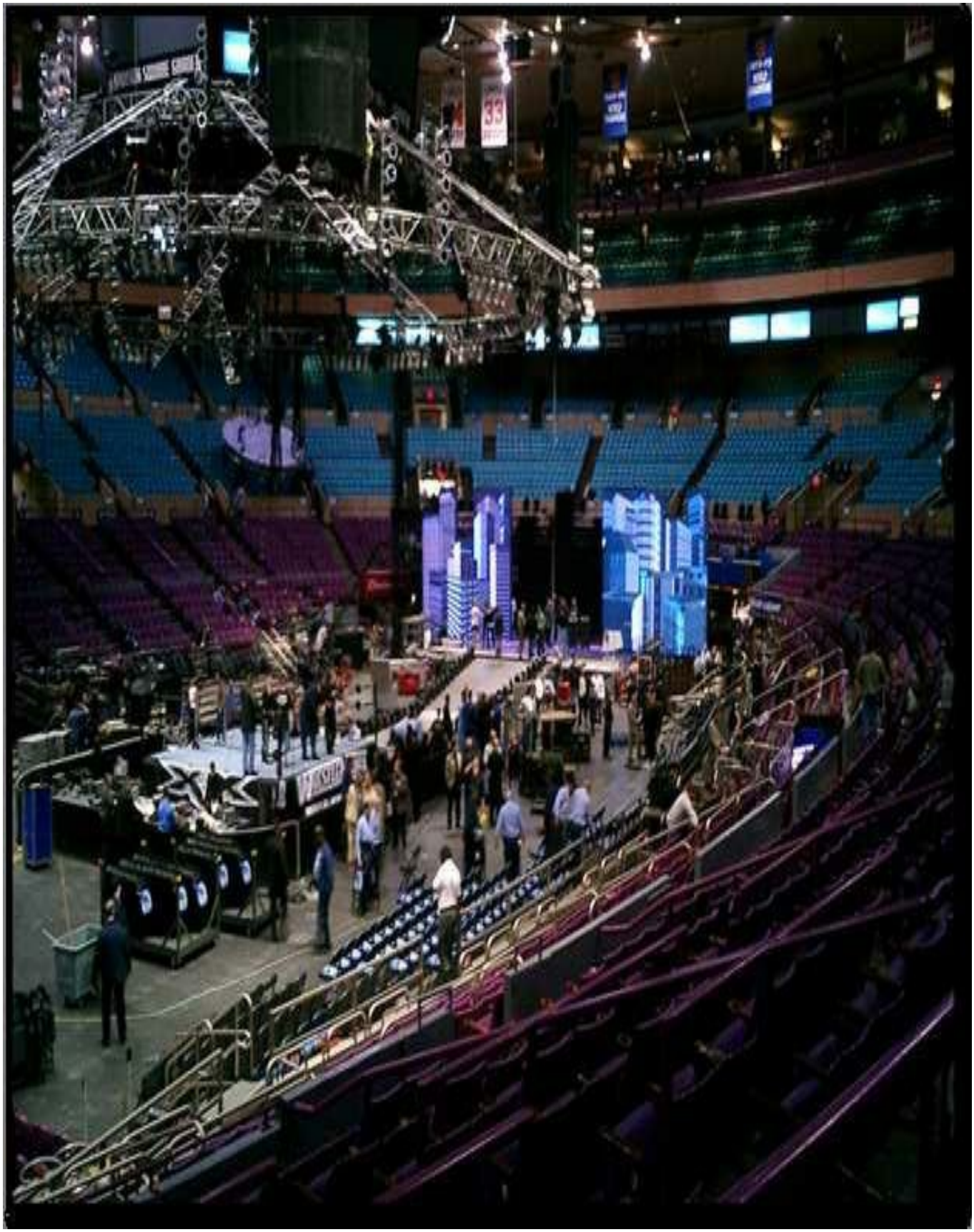
This next piece reads way more positive than my real mood at the time would reflect. I really tried to avoid complaining about company stuff on my website and reading this now I'm amazed by the positive spin I put on this event. Everything I talk about is true and all of the stuff I did do at WrestleMania XX was fun, but truth be told I was pretty disappointed about getting left off the card yet again. As I mentioned earlier my back was getting pretty bad at this point, something I kept quiet publicly, but the lack of respect being shown me and my work was also getting to me. Creatively WWE was pushing a lot of developmental talent that was subpar in my

opinion and certainly not in my league as a worker. This show was one of the last straws that led to me deciding to pack in my in ring career. This was the show I decided that this creative team either had no intention of doing anything with me or was just incapable of coming up with a way to use my talents, and since I wasn't going to politic or beg for a push I knew my time in the ring with WWE was coming to an end

If you don't remember the card from this show there was a 4 team WWE Tag Team title match and the 4 teams involved were The Dudleys, La Resistance, Booker & RVD, and Garrison Cade & Mark Jindrak. Val Venis and I were a tag team at the time and were looked over for these other teams. The Dudleys and Booker & RVD deserved their spots. La Resistance, while nowhere near as talented as Val and I, were in an angle and fit into the match and how it was built. Jindrak and Cade on the other hand

were not figured into the angle, were far less experienced, and not anywhere close to as talented as us, yet they got the coveted spot as well as the biggest pay cheque of the year. When I did pack it in, I said it was a case of finding the balance between reward and sacrifice, which it absolutely was. With my back trouble and lack of time at home with my family, the sacrifice was pretty high. At this point I realized the rewards were too few and far between to make it all worthwhile, and I started looking into other options.

A day or two before Mania I helped Fit Finlay put together the women`s title match (Fit was a road agent at the time) and I started asking him about what the job of road agent included and started seriously looking into that as an option. I still wanted to contribute to the business and thought this would be a less painful, more rewarding way to do so.



As close as I got to standing on that stage
I was very disappointed taking this picture

"WrestleMania XX"

March 22, 2004

Well another WrestleMania has passed and I am yet to get my first official Mania match. Oh well, you can't win all the time. Well maybe YOU can, but I surely can't. Even without my match, WrestleMania week was a huge success for me. I say WrestleMania week because we always spend the whole week leading to Mania in town promoting and preparing for the event. I arrived in New York City Tuesday morning and went practically nonstop all week. Tuesday was book business for me. I finally got the chance to meet Maggie G, face to face. Maggie has been helping me with Book Marks since we

did Burglar in the Closet (which I think was the fall of 2002). Maggie is Lawrence Block's (Author of Burglar in the Closet) Webmaster/publicist, which is how we first made contact. Maggie has since hooked me up with Lee Child (Killing Floor) and T. Jefferson Parker (Silent Joe). We tried to meet once before but I got too busy and screwed it up. Tuesday we managed to sit down for lunch and we were lucky enough to have both Lee Child and Lawrence Block join us. We had a great time getting to know each other and I managed to walk away with several advance reader copies of some upcoming books. Most notable the latest Bernie Rhodenbarr mystery, Burglar on the Prowl, which is now on shelves, and is fantastic, and The Enemy, Lee Child's latest Jack Reacher book. I just started The Enemy so I will have to let you know about this one.

After lunch Maggie took me on a bit of a book tour, taking me to Partners & Crime,

a local mystery bookshop. It was a charming store and if you are ever in NY be sure to check it out at 44 Greenwich Ave (*Lance's note: it's still there in 2012*). After Partners & Crime, Maggie took me to The Strand a.k.a. 8 Miles of Books. The Strand is an unbelievably huge used bookstore, which I could have rummaged through for hours. Unfortunately I didn't have hours but I did manage to pick up a couple of odd hardcover books I'd been looking for. If you want to check out The Strand it's on the corner of Broadway and 12th street (*Lance's note: also still around in 2012*). That pretty much filled my Tuesday. I hit the gym, had dinner and relaxed in my room for a little bit of reading. I have this thing that if I get an advance copy of a book, I have to read it before it hits shelves. Burglar on the Prowl was hitting stores on Thursday so I had to get to it.

Wednesday I was booked up doing appearances. I had a morning meet and greet, and an afternoon Get Real appearance at a local Boys and Girls club. The Get Real program was a ton of fun and I hope the kids not only had fun, but got our message. Wednesday night I hit the ring to work out, and then it was back to my book.

Thursday was a busy one again. I had an early morning meeting at Warner Books. I've got an online friend who works for Warner. I think he is an Editor's assistant or an assistant Editor (something to that effect). Well this was my chance to finally meet Jason face to face and thank him for all his help with Book Marks. Jason was the one who put me in touch with Brian Haig (The Kingmaker), as well as my point man contacting Eoin Colfer (Artemis Fowl), and Dave Barry (Tricky Business). Jason gave me a quick tour of Warner books and hooked me up with some books I hope will be future

Book Club selections. Thursday afternoon, I had to pick my wife up at the airport. We spent the rest of the day just walking around New York taking in the sites. Friday was pretty much more of the same; we ventured to the top of the Empire State Building and did some shopping. Well…okay, my wife did some shopping; I pretty much followed her around carrying bags (LOL).

Saturday was the Hall of Fame. Going in I wasn't sure what I thought of the Hall of Fame. With the nature of our business how exactly do you judge who gets in and who doesn't? There are some incredibly talented guys who have never stepped foot near a main event and a lot of guys who can't work a lick who were on top their whole careers. If that wasn't confusing enough a baseball player (Pete Rose) was getting in. I went in somewhat skeptical. I think my wife and I would have gone to see a Broadway show if not for the Hall of Fame. After the fact, I'm

really glad I went, and my only real complaint was that the thing was looooong; it was over 4 hours, with no bathroom breaks, refreshments or food. Some of the speeches went long (wrestlers are never shy about taking the opportunity to talk about wrestling or themselves), but all were entertaining. The lone exception was Jack Lanza's induction speech for Bobby Heenan; I am still unsuccessfully trying to make sense of that one. If there was anyone there who has a clue what he was talking about, please clue me in!

The highlight of the night was Bobby Heenan. I had forgotten just how entertaining this guy was. I was always a fan of Bobby be it as a manager or announcer and let me tell you he hasn't lost a step. If they put this thing out on DVD you absolutely have to buy it for the Bobby Heenan speech alone. Bobby had the entire room roaring with laughter throughout and

even managed to make most of us cry by the end. I truly thought Ric Flair was going to have a coronary right up there on stage, he was laughing so hard. Bobby Heenan is the greatest manager this business has ever seen and if he were ever to come back, The Rock may have to change his name to "The second most electrifying man in Sports Entertainment"; this man knows how to entertain!

As for Pete Rose…I'm still not 100% sure he belongs in our Hall of Fame, but let me tell you, he is a class act who deserves to be in someone's. He was friendly, fun, willing to laugh at himself, and more importantly flattered and honoured to be there. He showed respect for our industry, and both Kane's induction speech and Pete's acceptance speech were entertaining. If we are going to have a non-wrestler in the Hall of Fame, I'm glad Pete Rose is the guy to do it. He is a quality human being who deserves

to be in his own Hall of Fame and maybe until baseball realizes that, we can welcome him in ours.

Now for the Show itself: WrestleMania XX. I watched the event with my wife on the big screen in the "Play by Play" room in MSG. You lose the feel of the crowd watching it on the screen, but the arena was sold out and then some, and the Play-by-Play room had catering. I thought the show was fantastic. There wasn't a bad match of the bunch, except for the Brock-Goldberg contest. Since, from what I understand, neither guy works for us anymore, let's just leave it at that. My favourite match was Eddie and Kurt. Now before everyone jumps all over me about how good the Three-way was, I'll admit it was a tight call. The reason I'm leaning towards the Eddie-Kurt match is I prefer single matches and there was a lot more pure wrestling in this one. The three-way was awesome but I still have to go with

Eddie and Kurt for my favourite match; the wrestling was just that good. If all I got to see were the two World Title matches, I would consider it a show of the year. Between the two of them I got 1 incredible hour of wrestling. Add to that all the other matches, an extremely cool stage set up, and a hair stipulation honoured, I call this show not just a home run, but a home run Pete Rose couldn't even top. I can't wait till LA and WrestleMania 21.

Till next week,
Lance

With Dawn Marie and my Wife in the family viewing room for WrestleMania XX. A great time but not where I thought I belonged

Feeling Good

A short piece but this next commentary contributed to my decision to wrap up my career. After my dissatisfaction with WrestleMania, I was looking for something to improve my mood and give me something to be happy about. Well this next commentary covers what was making me happy at this point in my career and realized I wanted may more of this in my future.

"Time off for good behaviour"

April 17, 2004

Okay, perhaps my behaviour hasn't been all that good, but I have in fact had time off. That's right. I've been completely off the road the last couple of weeks, just sitting at home, if you will. I realize not all of you have noticed this, which isn't all that surprising seeing that the amount of TV time I've been receiving hasn't been all that effected by my absence (LOL). So I guess the question now is, "What have I been doing?"

For the most part I've been doing nothing, well at least nothing wrestling related. I have been spending my time being a Dad. My time off has conveniently coincided with my daughter Rebecca's

spring break so the 5 of us have had the rare pleasure of spending time together as a family. “Five?” you say. That’s right, five: my wife and me, our two daughters, and our dog. That’s right; I’ve gotten a dog somewhere along the way. About 2 months ago we stopped by our local pet store just to look at all the pets and fell in love with a little Bichon/Shitzu cross pup. My wife and kids fall for a puppy every time we go there but this time I caved in too. We named him Jack and couldn’t be happier about having him, and believe me it’s good not to be the only male in the house for a change. The only odd thing is I constantly have people telling me that my dog is too small for me, or that they are at the very least surprised I would have a dog that small, or for that matter be seen in public with him. Apparently a little 8-pound fluffy puppy isn’t manly enough for a man of my mass, and people think that somehow the size of

my dog reflects poorly on my manhood. Let me just say this, I've lived my whole life with the belief that size doesn't matter (LOL) and I'm not about to change now. If you need a big mean dog to feel like a man, be my guest. I'll stick with my boy Jack!

We've taken in a couple of movies, visited the Calgary Science Centre, and just hung out together having fun. I even managed to do some spring yard work, like a regular person. I've also had the time to rest and rehab my back somewhat. I think I've mentioned here in the past that I've been fighting a nagging back problem for the better part of a year now and this time off has really helped. I feel better than I have in a long time.

Till next week,
Lance

My boy Jack, named after the Jack Reacher character from the Lee Child series of novels.

The End, Sort of

The next commentary is the last; it covers my last night on the active WWE roster. It may seem like it came out of nowhere but my decision to retire did come very quickly. Once I make up my mind I like to get on with it and move forward. It was the afternoon before this match that I sat down with Jim Ross to discuss possible alternatives to my career and we struck a deal, so my "retirement" match (at least for a time) happened only a couple hours after I decided to leave the roster. I'll have more to say but you should read my accounts of the night from back then first. See you again in a page or two.

"Full Circle"

April 26, 2004

Last Monday night in Calgary was a monumental evening for me. For those of you with terrible short-term memory, last Monday night was RAW live in Calgary. I've done 3 TV events in Calgary. The first was my WWE debut with the first Invasion run-in. The second I was not given a match. This third time I had a match and I am both happy and sad to tell you that it may have been my last. WHAT? No, I have not been fired, and no, I am not quitting the business. I am, if I can borrow an expression from good old Vinny Mac, moving onwards and upwards. A lot of you have been wondering why I have been completely off the road and

television the past few weeks; well this is your answer. I have been talking with the office about taking my career in a new direction for some time now. This actually dates back to before WrestleMania. I have been dissatisfied with my in ring career for quite a while. I have been lost in the quagmire for the better part of the year, with no direction, no focus, and quite frankly no forward motion. This isn't anyone's fault so much as it is a compilation of several factors. I have always wanted to be an important part of the product and I had come to the point where I was feeling that I could contribute more outside the ring than I have been inside it.

With the encouragement and support of Dave Finlay (WWE road agent and the man I respect most in this business), I started looking into the possibility of becoming a road agent. I've always thought I would be good at and enjoy being an agent when it

came time to hang up my boots and I was to the point where the idea of hanging them up was not looking all that unfavourable to me. I've mentioned my back troubles to you in the past and I have always played down the pain and discomfort I am in. The truth is my back has been quite bad and it was making my decision much easier. I have 4 bulging discs in my lower lumbar and a chronic problem with my sciatic nerve. It has gotten to the point where there are certain bumps I won't take and I am limping and in great pain after most matches. I have even had my legs go numb on me on a few occasions. It is a condition that with proper time off and rehab I could likely work through, but with the way everything else was going I started to look at alternatives, like the agent job. When I first broached the topic of the agent gig with the office they were a little hesitant yet receptive. I think they felt I could be an asset as an agent but thought the transition

from “locker room” to “office” would be a bit too quick. They then asked if I would be interested in the opportunity to pass on my knowledge as a trainer in OVW (WWE’s developmental territory). This caught my interest, as teaching was another avenue I’ve thought about for when I’m done wrestling. I was predominately working with guys recently brought up from OVW anyway, and this was a chance to get at them even earlier and maybe even make a difference. The office and I have been discussing terms for the training position for the past few weeks, which is why I’ve been sitting home. There was no point giving my character any direction if I wasn’t going to be wrestling much longer and to be honest the time off has done wonders for my back. It hasn’t felt this good in over a year.

Last Monday night in Calgary we came to an agreement for the trainer position, which I am quite excited about. They were

also nice enough to give me a match in Calgary so I could have fun and wrestle at home. So it was last Monday that my career came full circle. I was trained in Calgary, my WWE debut was at the Saddle Dome here and what will be my last match, at least for a while, (never say never) was in the Saddle Dome in Calgary as well. I hope everyone caught Heat on Sunday because that's when my last match aired. It was a real emotional time for me Monday night. The prospect of this being my last match weighed on me heavily. I was originally wrestling a local kid (I think the office figured why beat a regular guy with someone who won't be on TV again) but Steven Richards asked if they could switch our matches so he could work with me. I would have liked to have an amazing match for my last outing but I was a professional to the end and did my job. Stevie and I had a good 6-minute match for Heat (going all out with countless near falls

would have been out of place, in my opinion, and I've never been one to do a match just for my own purposes) and I had the time of my life. If this match is going to be my last I'm so glad it happened in Calgary. I am proud to be one of a long line of great (if you'll indulge my ego one last time) workers to come out of Calgary, and the support I received that night from the crowd was unbelievable. I love you all and can't thank you enough for making possibly my last night one to remember. I managed to get my "Tribute to Owen" flip in as well as my Davey Boy suplex, and if Benoit wasn't on the card I would have even worked in a Sharpshooter. My post match celebration was very emotional; if the cameras hadn't cut so quickly you may have even spotted a tear in my eye.

Part of me hopes there is another chapter to be written in my "in ring" wrestling career, but part of me wants it to

end as it did in Calgary…Alberta, Canada, in front of my family, my friends, and my city. Either way I hope you guys stick with me on my site because I'm going to keep this site going as long as my "Stormtroopers" keep stopping by. I am still going to be a part of this business and I am confident (cocky) enough to think an important part. If I can pass on my knowledge to the future of this business perhaps I can still, indirectly, have a positive effect on your wrestling enjoyment. I start in OVW May 2nd, and if all goes well that will be my regular gig. The travel schedule and off time should work out very favourably for my family and I am excited about my future role in this business.

All the best everyone, and thanks; I wouldn't have been able to have almost 14 years of fun in the ring if all of you hadn't showed up to watch. I am truly grateful.

Lance Evers

That's all she wrote

And that was it, the end of my full time wrestling career. Despite the displeasure I talked about in the end with my creative direction in WWE, I was completely happy and content to wrap it up on that show. While many people think I was misused in WWE and I will certainly admit I was not happy with my lack of direction at the end, I was in WWE longer than any other wrestling company and had many great experiences there. I got to work with icons of this business, like Ric Flair, The Undertaker, The Rock, and Hulk Hogan. I got to test myself with guys like Kurt Angle, Eddie Guerrero, and HHH, and more importantly I got to work with some of my best friends and have some of the greatest

matches of my career.

The highlights of my WWE career will always be my feuds with Edge, both in singles and tag team action, being Citizen Storm of the Hurri-League, teaming with Christian as the Un-Americans, my later teaming with His Lordship William Regal, and my on again off again tagging and feuding with Chris Jericho. While some people seem to remember the bad when they talk about how I was misused in WWE, I choose to remember all the good. There was so much more of the good, and I can't help but think that in the grand scheme of things, I was a very lucky man, and I'm very grateful for my time in WWE. Thanks for being a part of it; I couldn't have done it without all of you.

Lance Storm

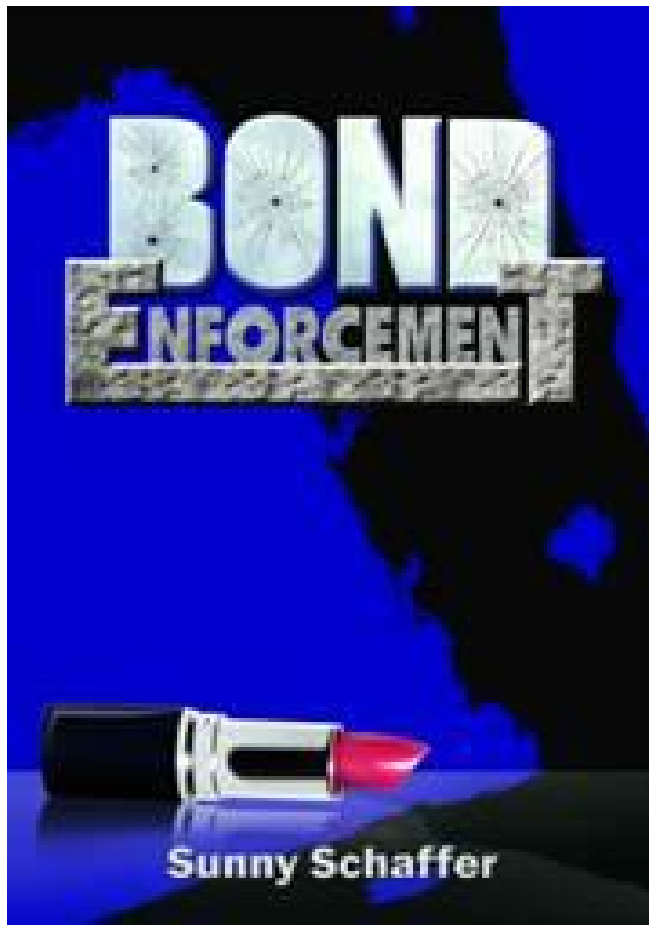
Recommended Reading

In closing I want to plug a few great inexpensive Lance Storm related books you may have over looked. The first two are by my 15 year old daughter who has self published two eBook novellas on Amazon. She writes under the pseudonym Sunny Schaffer, and writes a Melanie Bayliss series about a female Bounty Hunter. The books are quite funny and entertaining, and with a $0.99 price tag you really can't go wrong. I've included cover art and excerpts from each book, so if you want to check them out, read on; I'm sure she would appreciate the support. You can also follow her on Twitter @SunnySchaffer

If you remember Marcus Wynne from

the acknowledgements page, I mentioned that in addition to being a good friend, he is also one of my favourite authors. As a friend and author he has worked me in as a character in three of his novels. The first was With a Vengeance, and more recently his Johnny Wylde saga, where Lance T plays a small role in the first book and a much larger role in the second. I've included cover art from the books and a great Lance T excerpt from Too Wylde. These are some of the best action thrillers you will ever find and are priced ridiculously low at $2.99. All three are available through Amazon.com or for other formats on SmashWords.com as well.

Good Reading,
Lance Storm


BOND
ENFORCEMENT
Sunny Schaffer

Chapter 1

As my foot connected with Eugene's front door, images of me lying on the kitchen floor flashed through my mind, blood oozing from the bullet wound on my shoulder. That would never happen to me again!

"Bond enforcement! Eugene come out with your hands up!" I unclipped my Sig Sauer and stepped inside.

Eugene was standing in the middle of his living room wearing nothing but a blue baseball hat and a pair of grey sport socks. "Oh, uh…hi Melanie. Maybe you could come back later."

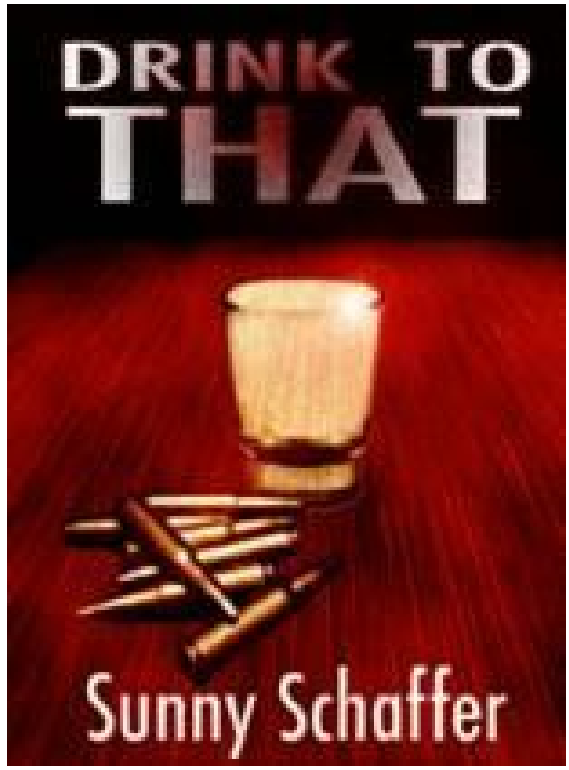
I holstered my gun and walked

towards him. “Sorry, but there isn’t much I can do when you don’t go to court.” I unclipped the handcuffs from my belt and looked at Eugene.

“I know, I know. On the ground, hands behind your head.” I had him trained so well.

I cuffed his hands behind his back then sat him down in the brown armchair that was shoved into the corner of the room. “Stay there and I’ll get you some pants.”

“Thanks, I’ll wait right here.” I really didn’t care if Eugene wanted pants or not. I just didn’t want to have to look at Mr. Droopy for the whole drive to the Ft. Myers police station.


DRINK TO
THAT
Sunny Schaffer

Chapter 1

"So why do you want to be a bounty hunter exactly?" I asked.

The man that was standing in front of me was close to seven feet tall and looked like he had been taking human growth hormone since he was 9. He was wearing jeans and a black muscle shirt. At the moment he was showing me how well he could hold his gun.

He looked over at me with a confused look on his face. "Haven't you been listening? I have a gun."

I tipped my head back and groaned, this was pointless, anyone who was suited for the job had better things to do than hunt

down scumbags. “Yeah I see that, but besides the gun do you have any skills that would be applicable?”

He looked at me again and narrowed his eyes; he appeared to be slightly confused. “What else could you possibly need?”

I slammed my clipboard down on the table that was set up in front of Lenny’s desk. “Next!” I was really getting annoyed with these ‘auditions’ if you will. The people were annoying and this folding chair was making my ass sore.

The man that was in front of me left and a new hopeful took his place. This man was short, stubby and probably 50 pounds overweight. He was wearing a grubby white T-shirt with a lobster printed on it and a pair of jeans that looked like they’d started to decompose. He scratched his belly and

chewed on what I hoped was gum.

I slipped a new piece of paper onto my clipboard and looked up at him. “What’s your full name and age?”

He shifted his hand from is belly to his crotch and gave it a good scratch. “Joe Chitte, age 44.”

“You can’t be serious.”

He stopped scratching and chewing and looked up at me. “Huh?”

I shook my head. “Never mind. So why do you want to be a bounty hunter?” Too bad Lenny wasn’t here to see this.

“Well I saw this thing on the TV and I thought…what the hell.”

"Right, have you ever done anything like this before?"

"Nah."

"And have you ever done anything physically demanding before?"

"Not really no." No surprises there.

"Well then…Next!" Joe left and I looked around the office and out the front windows. Fantastic! There were no more people I had to listen to. I packed up my clipboard and was just about to collapse the table when a young guy of average height and weight walked into the office. "Is it too late for an interview thing?"

I sighed and sat back down. "No, go ahead."

He nodded and stumbled into the room. “Well my name is Travis Jones and I just turned 23 yesterday.” The birthday boy.

“And why do you want to be a bounty hunter?”

Travis shrugged. “I just need some money.”

The more I looked at Travis the more I realized how young he actually was. His face was thin and he had slightly shaggy blonde hair. He had no significant muscle definition and you could tell by looking in his eyes that he had no idea how it goes down on the street.

I was just about to ask him if he knew what he was getting himself into when Lenny jogged into the office.

"Jesus, you're still doing interviews. Hurry it along; we have mountains of jumps piling up in the back." Lenny looked over at Travis and nodded. "I see some potential, hire him."

He walked over to his desk and shuffled around some papers. "Kid, you got any experience?"

Travis rubbed his elbow and shrugged. "Well not really."

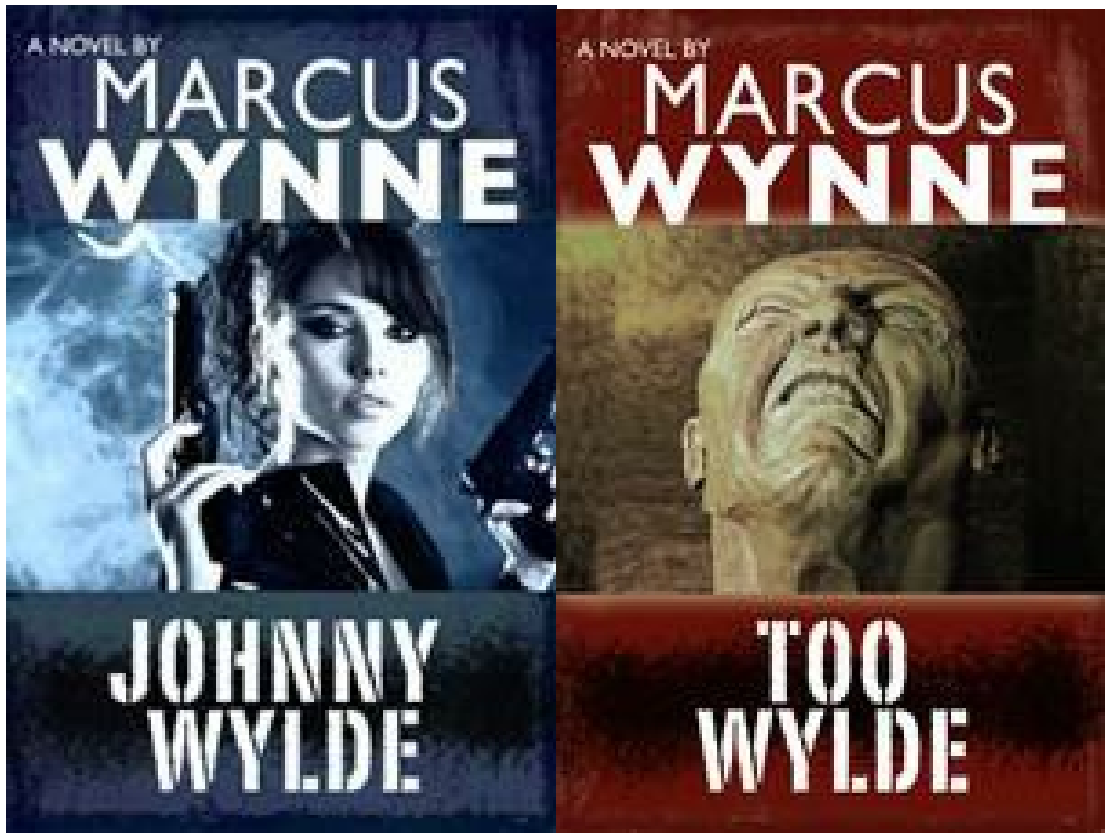
Lenny grabbed his Beretta off the desk and walked over to the door. "That's okay, it's all good. Mel, you can train him for the next little bit. Get him the papers to sign and all that shit, then take him out on a few easy ones."

I looked over at Lenny when he was halfway out the door. "Don't ever call me

Mel." I looked back at Travis. "Well then, I guess you're hired."

The Johnny Wylde Saga

By Marcus Wynne



Excerpt from Too Wylde

Lance T perched on an extra-tall spindle leg kitchen stool in front of a full length mirror. Behind him, a tall naked brunette, swollen silicon breasts and skinny legs, carefully scraped a safety razor through the white foam on his back.

"Careful," he said.

"Sorry, Lance," the stripper said. "Lemme get a fresh razor."

She took a fresh disposable from the ten-pack on her makeup table, ran it gingerly down his back. "That's better, baby."

A few strokes and it was done. His back and chest gleamed, hairless, and the muscles stood out after the kettlebell workout he'd run through in the back gym he maintained

in the back of The Trojan Horse.

The Trojan Horse. Finest Gentleman's Club in all of Lake City. Hottest strippers. Best buffet. And the occasional shoot-out.

Lance's club. He loved his job.

Having strippers shave his back wasn't even part of it.

Lucille, the brunette, took a warm wet towel and wiped off a few dabs of shaving cream. "There you go, baby."

"Thanks, Lucille," he said.

It was time. He shrugged into a black silk shirt, tucked it into Armani trousers and laced a Hermes leather belt into place. Ferragamos, oxford, on his feet, over Dior stockings. Lucille spritzed him with whatever the scent of the day was.

Good to go.

Lance T went out the door, down a hallway. Felt like he did in his wrestling days. Ready for the crowd. He came out a side door into the club, off to the far side, away from the runway and the stage. A new girl, Tina Marie, was working the pole. He studied her critically. She needed work.

But then, they all did, at first.

He nodded to Silent Kai, his long time bouncer, forever mute because of a knife in his voice box during an epic brawl that at first killed his business, then brought it back to life like a zombie doing the lindy hop, as all the Lake City wannabes wanted to hang out in the club that had been the scene of a major shoot out between Lake City PD's one and only female man-killer cop, the Russian Mob and the Cambodian gangsters. He ended up making bank, and even kept the bullet holes in the wall, put a frame around

them so the wannabes could get their pictures taken next to them.

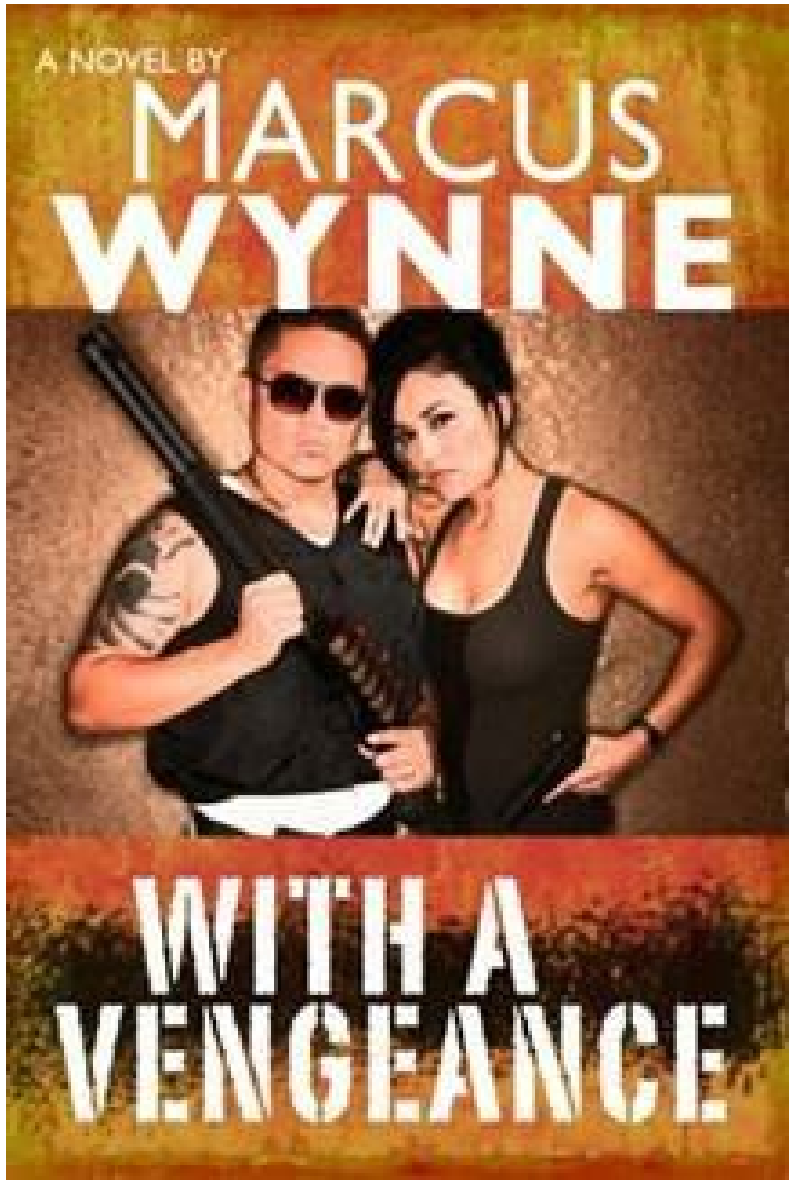
There was a long line of pictures; all his girls, the dancers that put dollars in his pocket every day, a few of them slipping him an extra envelope from time to time with a percentage -- not too much, don't want to kill the Golden Goose or anything -- of their earnings on the side, or their belly, or their backs, up to them, he didn't care, as long as he got his cut and they didn't bring heat down on him. Vice took their pay offs in various ways: pussy, free drinks and food, of course, but also the occasional tip, some information the girls pulled out of the low-lifes that came through here and the occasional dark side high roller, the use of a room, looking the other way when Internal Affairs or Professional Standards came sniffing around.

That was bidness here in Lake City.

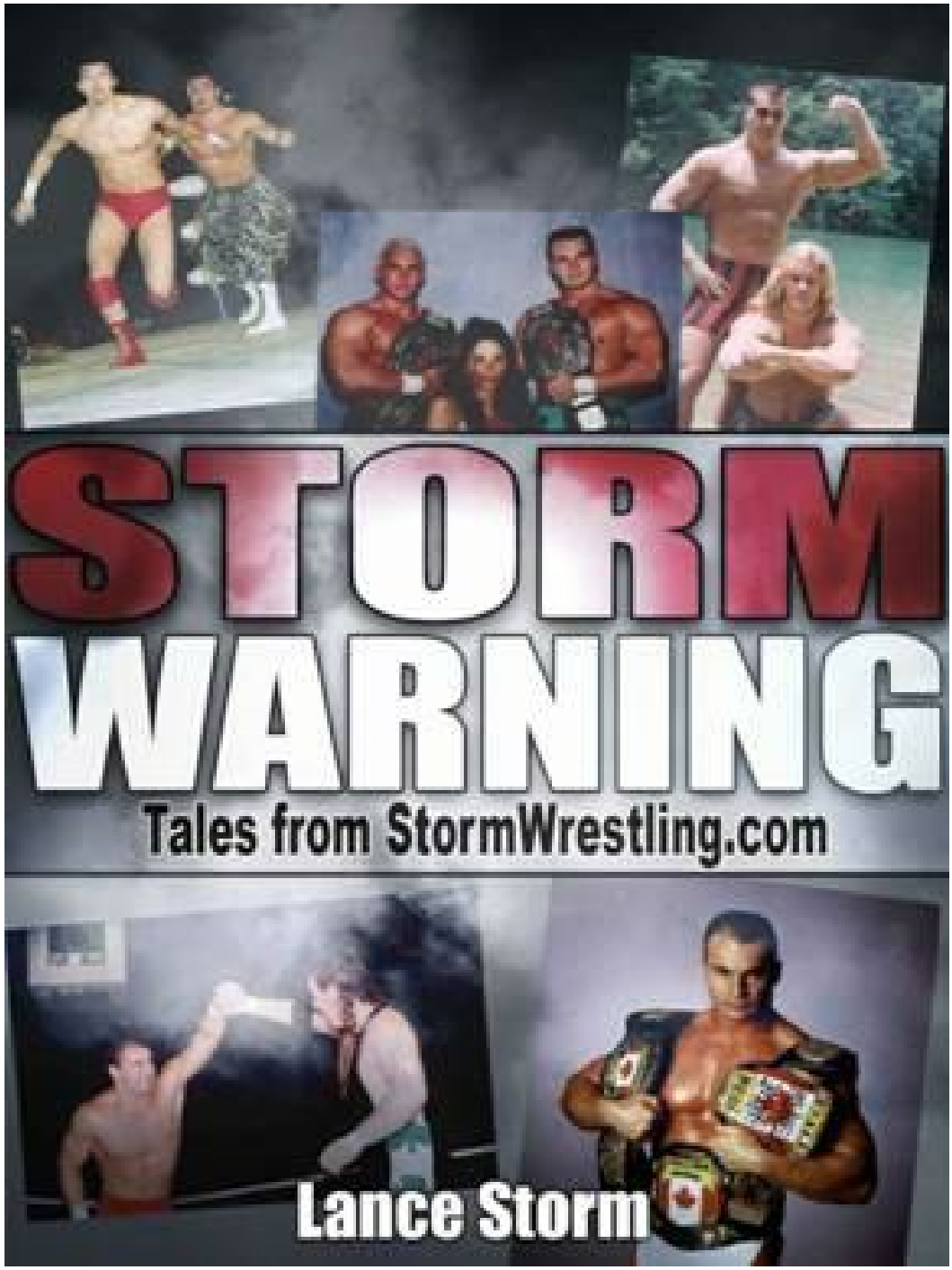
Everybody gets a taste of the good. That's what it takes to keep the good coming.

Lance surveyed his kingdom.

The Trojan Horse was good.


A NOVEL BY
MARCUS
WYNNE
WITH A
VENGEANCE

Also Available from Amazon



The End

Lance Storm

Table of Contents

“Life Sucks?: Part 2”	300
“Malarkeys: Part 1”	543
“Malarkeys: Part 2”	551
Chapter 1	823
Chapter 1	826